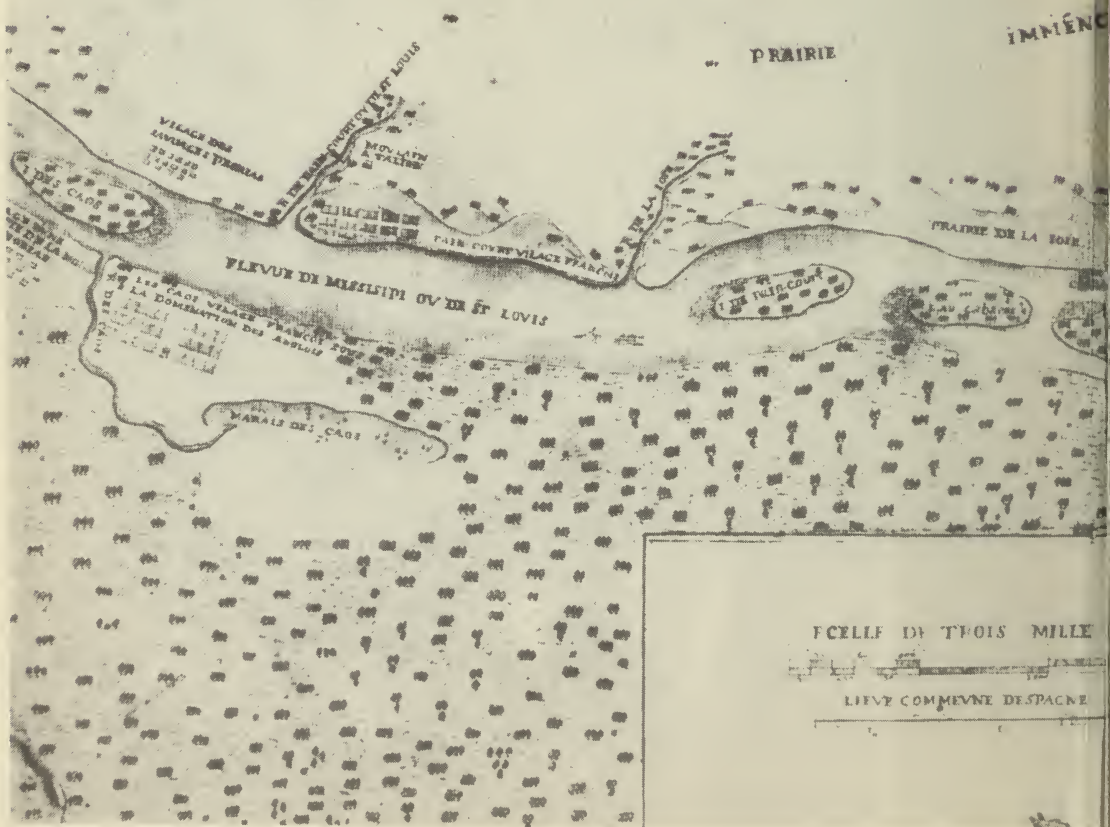


*The Early Histories
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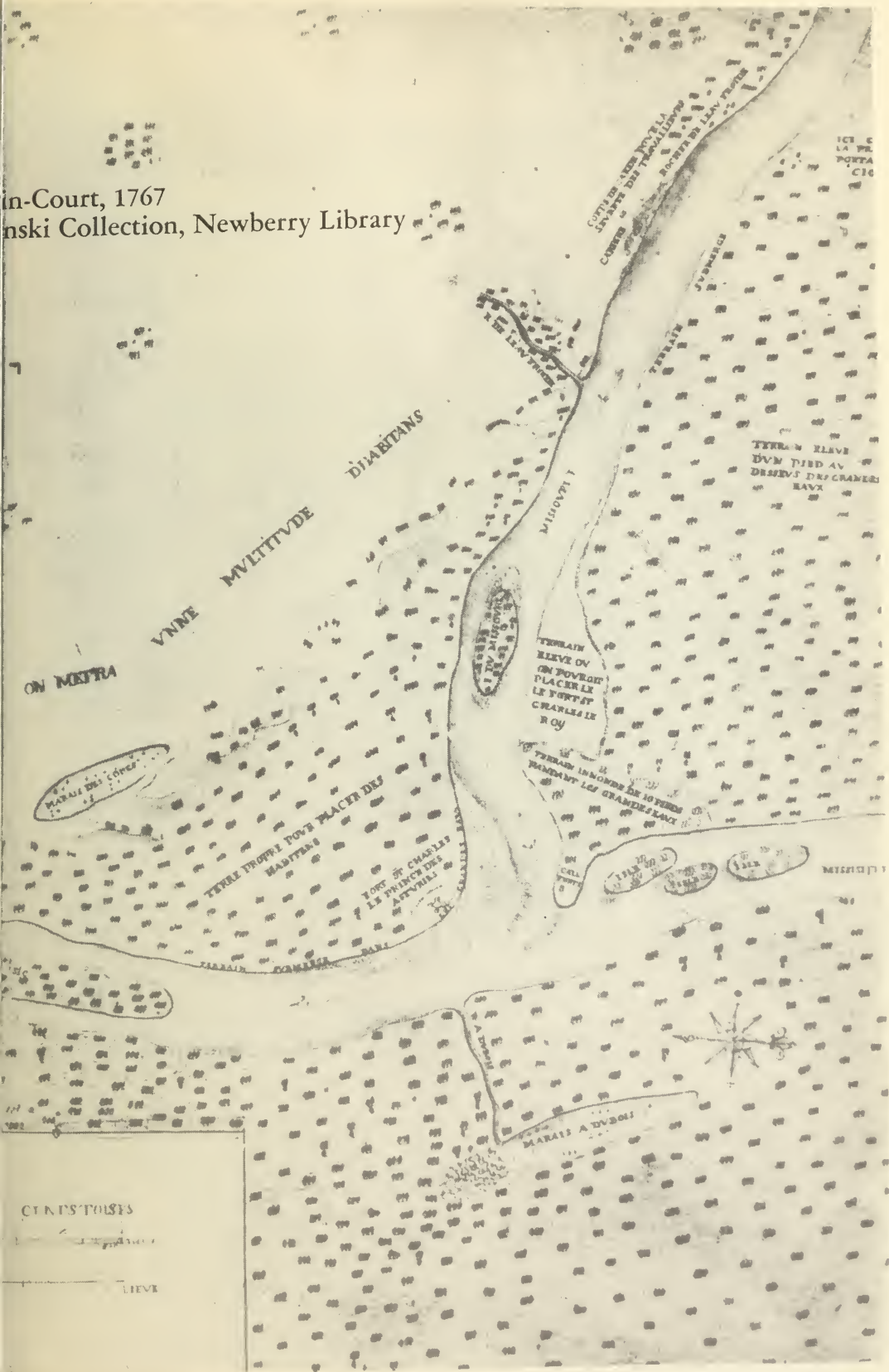


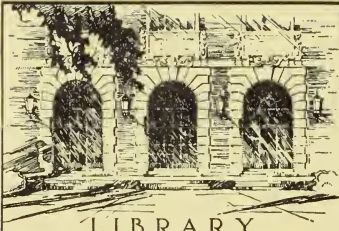
RELEVÉ D'UNE PARTIE DE LA MISSISSIPPI ET DU
MISSOURI DEPUIS LE VILAGE DE PAIN-COURT
JUSQU'AU ROCHER DE LEAU FROIDE FAIT AUX
ILLINOIS PROVINCE DE LA LOUISIANE LE 10
OCTOBRE 1766.

Guy Dufossat: The Village
from the



In-Court, 1767
nski Collection, Newberry Library





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The Early Histories of St. Louis

JOSEPH DESLOGE FUND
Publication No. 2

*The Early Histories
of
St. Louis*

EDITED BY

JOHN FRANCIS McDERMOTT

ST. LOUIS

ST. LOUIS HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS FOUNDATION

1952

by JOHN FRANCIS McDERMOTT

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To My Father

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Preface

This volume is *not* a history of St. Louis nor a compilation of descriptions of the town, but a collection of the first historical sketches of the founding and the early years of the town which are based upon primary sources: the papers and statements of its original citizens. Its purpose is to bring into one place all such extant accounts. The basic document, it will be seen, is Auguste Chouteau's "Narrative," which, though not published until years after the last piece here printed, was well known and often consulted. As the statement of Pierre La-Clède's assistant and friend, it is the *only* eye-witness story of the founding of the town. Official papers—French, Spanish, British, and American—have brought us a much fuller knowledge of colonial days in St. Louis than Chouteau's fragmentary paper gives us, but no other source has been discovered to date which details the establishment of the town. Equally important is the testimony given by Chouteau before the Recorder of Land Titles in 1825.

The other five selections can be regarded as serious attempts to write the story of St. Louis at first hand. The contributions of Paxton and Beck were incidental to their major purposes of producing a *Directory* for St. Louis and a *Gazetteer* for Illinois and Missouri; but they are certainly worth places in this volume. "A Creole" was concerned only with the actual founding of the town; his brief statement is clearly drawn from Auguste Chouteau's papers. Wilson Primm and Joseph N. Nicollet produced historical essays that have remained important.

The introductory essay surveys all historical comments found before 1860, whether lengthy or brief, whether by historians

or travelers, and indicates the significance of the pieces reprinted. A documented chronology for the history of St. Louis from 1764 to 1821 and a list of selected references accompany it.

The histories in this volume are published without annotation except for such notes as their authors originally appended. No corrections have been made even of the most obvious errors of fact nor has any attempt been made to reconcile the contradictions between the accounts. The sole purpose is to make these texts available in one volume. A few awkwardly intrusive commas have been cut and a very few typographical faults have been corrected; otherwise the sketches have been reproduced exactly.

The St. Louis Historical Documents Foundation and the editor both wish to express deep appreciation of the interest of Joseph Desloge whose latest generous gift has made possible the publication of this book.

As always I stand indebted for many courtesies to Clarence E. Miller, Librarian, and Elizabeth Tindall, Reference Librarian, of the Mercantile Library of St. Louis, to Charles van Ravenswaay, Director, Marjorie Douglas, Curator, and Barbara Kell, Librarian, of the Missouri Historical Society, and to Ruth Harry and the Washington University Library. John Francis Bannon, S.J., Professor of History at St. Louis University, was kind enough to read my manuscript and to discuss certain critical problems with me. For help in preparing the manuscript and in proofreading as well as for the index I am deeply grateful to my wife, Mary Stephanie.

John Francis McDermott

St. Louis
12 January 1952

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The Early Histories of St. Louis

Introduction

Auguste Chouteau and the Early Histories of St. Louis

On 24 February 1829 the St. Louis *Missouri Republican* announced the death of "the venerable Col. AUGUSTE CHOUTEAU, the Patriarch of St. Louis." Rightly was he called the patriarch of the town, for he had assisted in its founding and had for many years been its leading citizen. He had not yet reached his fourteenth birthday when, in August, 1763, he had left his native New Orleans to go to the Illinois Country as the clerk and lieutenant of Pierre LaClède. In December of that year he accompanied his employer on an exploring tour of the west bank of the Mississippi from Ste. Genevieve to the mouth of the Missouri, and in February, 1764, he was sent from Maxent, LaClède and Company's temporary headquarters at Fort Chartres with a crew of thirty workmen to clear the ground and build the trading post that was the beginning of St. Louis. It was under his supervision that the first trees were felled on 15 February and the first building constructed. The enterprising LaClède unfortunately died in June, 1778, while his town was yet in its infancy, but young Chouteau, who had become his partner, survived him fifty-one years until the founder was but a faint memory in the town.¹

1. This introduction is not intended for a history of St. Louis, nor is it within the scope of this publication to present a biography of Auguste Chouteau. However, a few facts ought to be summarized here concerning him and his family. His father, René Auguste Chouteau (born L'Hermenault, France, 1723; died New Orleans, 1776) married Marie Thérèse Bourgeois (born New Orleans, 1733; died St. Louis, 1814) in New Orleans, 20 September 1748. Their five children were all born in New Orleans and were baptized in the cathedral there: Auguste, baptized

Auguste succeeded to the prestige of LaClède among St. Louisans as well as with the Spanish officials, and the Americans recognized him as first citizen when in 1804 they took possession of Jefferson's Louisiana Purchase. For a quarter of a century longer they turned to him for advice and guidance, for influence among the French and among the Indians. They looked to him, too, for knowledge of the old days, of the founding of the town and the tale of its troubles and excitements. He was not merely sought out and consulted by the local and Federal authorities: travelers made it their business to meet and talk with this well-informed, loquacious old gentleman whose life and experience summed up early times in St. Louis and the West.

Among such visitors in his later years was Prince Paul of Württemberg who, in the spring of 1823, went out of his way to make Chouteau's acquaintance. With some difficulty he reached the latter's country place near Florissant and enjoyed a "cordial and most charming reception" from the "vivacious old man of seventy-three." Paul fell sick, but the time passed

9 September 1749; (Jean) Pierre, born 10 October, baptized 19 October 1758; Marie Pélagie, born 12 October, baptized 15 October 1760; Marie Louise, born 4 December, baptized 21 December 1762; Victoire, born 23 March, baptized 9 May 1764. Auguste left New Orleans with LaClède in August, 1763. Mme. Chouteau and her other four children probably left New Orleans in May or June, 1764—Pierre Chouteau testified in 1825 that he had arrived in St. Louis for the first time "about six months after the foundation of the same." Auguste served LaClède as his clerk from the departure from New Orleans in 1763 until the spring of 1768. At that time LaClède made a deed of gift of certain property to the five Chouteau children "in consideration of the faithful service which he has received from Mr. Auguste Choutaud, during the several years in which he has worked for him as his Clerk" (4 May 1768—French and Spanish Archives of St. Louis). Thereafter, Auguste Chouteau traded in partnership with LaClède until the latter's death, 20 June 1778. Even a casual examination of the French and Spanish Archives of St. Louis (MSS), of Houck's *Spanish Regime in Missouri*, Kinnaird's *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, Nasatir's *Before Lewis and Clark*, Carter's *Territorial Papers* (Missouri volumes), Marshall's *Bates Papers*, and the Chouteau and other manuscripts collections at the Missouri Historical Society will show the position of importance that Chouteau filled in St. Louis during his lifetime.

pleasantly, for "Mr. Chouteau diverted me by relating many most interesting observations concerning the Indians on the upper Missouri, observations which he had made on his trips. They seemed to me to bear the stamp of absolute truthfulness. It is a pity that Mr. Chouteau never made an effort to publish his many experiences among the aborigines. In this he showed a degree of modesty which I find almost exaggerated in view of his vast store of information and culture."²

Two years later Levasseur and the other members of Lafayette's party were equally fascinated by "this enterprising man, who, with his axe, felled the first tree of the ancient forest on the place where the city of St. Louis stands, who raised the first house, about which, in so short a time, were grouped the edifices of a rich city; who, by his courage and conciliating spirit, at first repressed the rage of the Indians, and afterwards secured their friendship. . . . It was highly interesting to behold seated at the table the founder of a great city,³ one of the principal defenders of the independence of a great nation, and the representatives of four young republics. . . . As might be readily supposed, the conversation was highly interesting. Mr. Augustus Choteau was asked a great many questions respecting his youthful adventures and enterprises."⁴

2. *First Journey to North America in the Years 1822 to 1824* ([Stuttgart, Cotta, 1835], translated from the German by William G. Bek, *South Dakota Historical Collections*, XIX [1938]), 232-234.

3. It should be emphasized that Auguste Chouteau never claimed to be the founder of St. Louis. Travelers sometimes reported him so after listening to the old man talk about the early days. Local writers in the 1820's or 1830's on occasion hailed him as founder. It remains, however, that in his own "Narrative" and in his official testimony in 1825 Chouteau presented himself as the assistant of Pierre LaClède; he stated definitely that LaClède chose the site of St. Louis in December, 1763, and that LaClède sent him from Fort Chartres on 10 February 1764 to begin work on the establishment of the trading post and village. After all, for a boy a few months past his fourteenth birthday to be placed in charge of such a project was a considerable recognition of his ability. The fact that young Chouteau did arrive on the 14th of February and start clearing for construction on the 15th gives him good claim to a place as co-founder.

4. Auguste Levasseur, *Lafayette in America* (translated by John D. Godman, 2 volumes, Philadelphia, Carey and Lea, 1829), II, 127.

The following year, 1826, Bernhard, Duke of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach, visited St. Louis. One of his first calls was on Auguste Chouteau, who was not then at home. Later, the Duke went again to meet this "venerable man of eighty years" who was never averse to talking with visitors. "He told us," wrote Bernhard, "that at the founding of St. Louis, he felled the first tree. His house . . . was the first substantial building erected here. The conversation of this aged man, who received us like a patriarch, surrounded by his descendants, was very interesting. He was of opinion that the people from whom the Indian antiquities have come down to us, either by a pestilential disease, or by an all-destroying war, must have been blotted from the earth. He believed that Behring's Straits were more practicable formerly than at present, at least it must have been Asiatic hordes that came to America. How otherwise (asked he), could the elephants, since there have been none ever upon this continent, have reached the American bottom, where their bones are now found?" After dinner that same day Colonel Chouteau, with others of his family, returned the Duke's call. "He staid long with us and was very talkative. He related, for example, that at the commencement of the settlement of St. Louis, the Indians attacked the town, which was only defended by one hundred and fifty men, and that they were driven off. After this attack, the Spaniards had built the defensive towers, of which the remains stand yet around the city."⁵

Clear it is that Chouteau loved to talk about the early days, that his old-man's reminiscences preserved a thread of continuity for the town. It is also certain that he would much rather talk than write. He would, of course, respond to an official request for information. There can be no doubt that he supplied Meriwether Lewis with full answers to the "mixed questions relating to Upper Louisiana" which that officer re-

5. *Travels through North America during the Years 1825 and 1826* (2 volumes, Philadelphia, Carey, Lea & Carey, 1828), II, 102-103.

quested of him on 4 January 1804—though, unhappily, his answers are not now to be found. Such a series of statements must have provided a very considerable account of economic conditions of the St. Louis area at that time.⁶ Again, in 1816, he sent in to the Indian Office at Washington a long series of notes on the Indian tribes of the Upper Mississippi and the Missouri Rivers.⁷ There were probably other occasions on which he wrote largely from his store of knowledge. But he had no desire for self-expression on paper, no flair for journalizing, he felt no need for keeping a day-by-day record of his activities.

At some point in his later life, however, he did undertake to write an account of the founding and the early years of St. Louis. This document, which is known formally today as the "Fragment of Col. Auguste Chouteau's Narrative of the Settlement of St. Louis" and informally (and incorrectly) called "Chouteau's Journal," was probably composed during the first or second decade of the nineteenth century. It may well have been written at the time of the Louisiana transfer and have been done at the instigation of Amos Stoddard or Meriwether Lewis. Certainly, one may assume from the language used by Amos Stoddard a few years later in his pages

6. Frederic L. Billon, *Annals of St. Louis in Its Early Days Under the French and Spanish Dominations* (St. Louis, 1886); 384-385. The questions were about the present population, the number of emigrants from the United States since 31 October 1803, the number of slaves and other people of color, the quality of land granted to or claimed by individuals and the nature of their rights, the conditions of wealth, the situation and extent of the settlements, the condition of agriculture and improvement of lands, the amount of dollar goods annually brought into Upper Louisiana and the proportion of them used for the Indian trade and for home consumption, the exports of Upper Louisiana in dollars and the routes by which the exports were shipped, the names and nicknames of all villages, their location, date of establishment, number of houses and inhabitants, the mines and minerals to be found in the colony, their location and production, and the animals, birds, and fishes of Louisiana, their form, habits, appearance, and disposition.

7. Grant Foreman (ed.), "Notes of Auguste Chouteau on the Boundaries of Various Indian Nations," *Glimpses of the Past* (Missouri Historical Society), VII (1940), 119-140.

on St. Louis that this officer saw the manuscript while he was on duty in St. Louis in 1804.

How extensive Chouteau's manuscript was cannot be determined. The extant fragment consists of fourteen legal size pages of rough draft. Gabriel Chouteau many years later declared that his father had kept a journal for twenty years. If that is true, the journal is lost, for the fragment given to the St. Louis Mercantile Library in 1857 is not a journal or diary kept from year to year but a narrative account written at some time considerably after the events recorded. The extant manuscript shows the actual process of composition with numerous sentences and paragraphs struck out and more satisfactory versions written in. Furthermore, the narrative is very brief—it is obviously the first part of such an historical account. On this point Gabriel Chouteau wrote to Professor Waterhouse in 1882: "The few pages that exist are not all that my father wrote upon the history of St. Louis. He kept a journal . . . [which] contained a full account of the leading events of our early history. It was replete with important information. When N. J. [*sic*] Nicollet was gathering materials for a work on the West, he solicited the privilege of consulting my father's Journal. The diary was sent to him in Baltimore, and was burned while in his custody. The fragment that remains, having been written in an old account book that was not sent to Mr. Nicollet, escaped the fire."⁸

Gabriel Chouteau's letter is not as specific as we could wish, but it must be remembered that he was writing at the age of eighty-eight about his father who had died fifty-three years earlier. It is certain that Nicollet did have access to Colonel Chouteau's papers and he may well have been permitted to take some portion of them to Baltimore, for he and Henry Chouteau had become close friends. Among others he may have had possession of a completed draft or copy of the

8. J. Thomas Scharf, *History of Saint Louis City and County* (2 volumes, Philadelphia, Everts, 1883), I, 66, n. 2.

"Narrative." It is possible that the fragment remaining among the Chouteau papers in St. Louis is merely a portion of a first draft which had not been destroyed when the fair copy was made. We must hesitate to deny Gabriel Chouteau's statement that a much longer manuscript once existed. Rather, we are probably safe in accepting it. The very fact that two-thirds of the way through his quite detailed pages on the founding of the town Chouteau broke off to write at some length about St. Ange is an indication that he later wrote or intended to write much more. The last paragraph in the extant manuscript, too, is merely a transition to further details. Comparison of the fragment with the Nicollet history strongly supports the presumption that Chouteau wrote a much longer account than has remained to us in his hand. The later writer acknowledged access to Chouteau's papers and to judge from details presented (and not included in Chouteau's testimony in 1825) he made use of much more information than the extant "Narrative" affords. Furthermore, among the papers listed in the inventory of Chouteau's estate in 1829 was "a bundle of Manuscripts relating to the History of Louisiana."⁹ Among such papers may well have been Chouteau's own completed story of the colonial decades of St. Louis.

Whatever the full extent of Chouteau's "Narrative" and whatever other documents bearing on the first years of the town he may have had, the fragment now in the Mercantile Library and the depositions made in 1825 remain the only first hand accounts of the founding of St. Louis. To them every historian of the city has been indebted.

The nature of this indebtedness can best be shown by a summary examination of the several attempts, during its first century, to write a "history" of the town and of the briefer comments that may be found in the works of travelers and

9. John Francis McDermott, *Private Libraries in Creole Saint Louis* (Institut Français de Washington, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1938), 150.

interested persons. With a few exceptions, it will be seen, the stories of the settling of the town derive from Chouteau's "Narrative," from his testimony before the Recorder of Land Titles in 1825, or from his table talk. What is not quoted, from him, first or secondhand, is often an echo of his conversation.

The first printed notice—which owes nothing to Chouteau—is somewhat brief to be dignified by the name of "a history." Lieutenant Philip Pittman, then assistant engineer at the post of Fort Chartres, in August, 1766, visited St. Louis in company with Captain Harry Gordon and Ensign Thomas Hutchins. The British officers were well received by St. Ange, stayed two days, met and admired LaClède, and spoke handsomely of the new settlement. Only Pittman, however, recorded the origin of "Saint Louis or Pain Court." His facts (published in 1770) must have been derived directly from St. Ange and LaClède:

This village is one league and a half above Kaoquias, on the west side of the Mississippi, being the present headquarters of the French in these parts. It was first established in the year 1764, by a company of merchants, to whom Mons. D'Abbadie had given an exclusive grant for the commerce with the Indian nations on the river Missouri; and for the security and encouragement of this settlement, the staff of French officers and the commissary were ordered to remove there, upon the rendering Fort Chartres to the English; and great encouragement was given to the inhabitants to remove with them, most of whom did. The company has built a large house, and stores here, and there are about forty private houses and as many families. No fort or barracks are yet built. The French garrison consists of a captain-commandant, two lieutenants, a fort-major, one sergeant, one corporal, and twenty men.¹⁰

No other historical statement appeared in print until after the Louisiana Purchase. Many travelers in the Spanish colonial and the American territorial days commented interestingly

10. *The Present State of the European Settlements on the Mississippi* (edited from the London, 1770, edition by Frank Heywood Hodder, Cleveland, Arthur H. Clark Co., 1906), 94.

enough upon what they saw but they seldom inquired into the beginnings of the place. Neither Collot in 1796 nor Perrin du Lac in 1802, for example, nor Christian Schultz in 1807 or Bradbury in 1810 had anything to say about the founding of the town.

Captain (later Major) Amos Stoddard, however, who officiated at the transfer of Upper Louisiana, was moved to write a book which he modestly entitled *Sketches, Historical and Descriptive, of Louisiana*. Published in 1812, this volume was the first attempt by an American to make an analytic study of the newly acquired territory, its people, and their customs; its materials concerning St. Louis must have been gathered during his tour of duty there in 1804. The town, he wrote, "was founded in 1764 by 'Pierre Laclade, Maxan, and company,' who associated for the purposes of trade. They conceived it a position where the trade of the Missouri, Mississippi, and the other rivers was most likely to center. . . . In 1766 the village received a large accession of inhabitants from the opposite side of the river, who preferred the government of Spain to that of England." He then added brief remarks about the attack of 1780 and the subsequent fortifying of the town.¹¹ Stoddard made no pretence of writing a history of the town: he was merely supplying background facts for his report of conditions at the time of the transfer. His brief statement is important because of its relation to the Chouteau "Narrative." It is only from Chouteau, the executor and surviving partner of LaClède, that Stoddard could have obtained the form of designation of a firm that had been dissolved thirty-five years earlier. Furthermore, the very phrasing shows that Stoddard obtained his information not in New Orleans but in St. Louis, for the proper sequence of names was Maxent, LaClède and Company, whereas in St. Louis references the junior partner is regularly given precedence.

11. *Sketches, Historical and Descriptive, of Louisiana* (Philadelphia, Matthew Carey, 1812), 218-219.

Two other travelers in the second decade of the century made brief comment on the beginnings of St. Louis. Henry Marie Brackenridge, in many ways so excellent a reporter of territorial Missouri, was content to note that "St. Louis was first established in 1764" without making reference to the circumstances of the founding. He had little to say of the colonial years except to place the Indian attack incorrectly in 1779 and, equally incorrectly, to credit George Rogers Clark with checking it.¹² Edwin James, official reporter of Major S. H. Long's 1819-20 western exploring expedition, noted more specifically that "Saint Louis, formerly called Pain Court, was founded by Pierre La Clade and his associates in 1764"—here again is an echo of Chouteau through Stoddard.¹³

Apart from Chouteau's "Narrative" (which, though known and available, remained in manuscript until 1858) the first serious attempt to write an historical sketch of the town was that of John A. Paxton in 1821. His "Notes on St. Louis" (reprinted in the present volume) is the work of a professional directory-maker, an alert outsider who determined to supply by way of preface to his *St. Louis Directory for 1821* an appropriate account of a town which was daily increasing in importance. His reference to the settlement of the place shows clearly his debt to Chouteau: the second paragraph is a summary of the opening of the "Narrative" and in many places uses its actual phrasing. Paxton's account of later days, of course, made use of other sources.¹⁴

12. *Views of Louisiana together with a Journal of a Voyage up the Missouri River, in 1811* (Pittsburgh, Cramer, Spear and Eichbaum, 1814). 122-123. Nor had he anything to say about its origin in his contributions to the *Missouri Gazette* in 1811.

13. Edwin James, *Account of an Expedition from Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mountains performed in the Years 1819, 1820 . . . under the command of Major S. H. Long* (3 volumes, Philadelphia, Carey and Lea, 1823), I, 56. "The history and present condition of this important town," James added, "are too well known to be dwelt upon in this place."

14. Paxton was editor of *The Stranger's Guide* (Philadelphia, 1810) and *The New Orleans Directory and Register* (New Orleans, 1822). All sketches reprinted in this volume are described in introductory notes accompanying the text.

Another statement of considerable interest was made in the United States Senate by Thomas Hart Benton on 18 March 1822. In support of a bill to perfect French and Spanish land titles the Senator from Missouri had much to say about the early history of the West, but he did not intend to produce and it cannot be claimed that he was furnishing an historical account of Upper Louisiana in its colonial days. He made some grandiloquent, though erroneous references to the "riflemen of the West" saving St. Louis in 1780. One of his sources was Stoddard's *Sketches*; another was probably Brackenridge's *Views of Louisiana*.¹⁵

More important was a passage in a book written in the same year. Lewis C. Beck's purpose was to produce a *Gazetteer* of Illinois and Missouri, not to write a history. Nevertheless, the ten pages he gave to an historical and descriptive account of St. Louis deserve to be considered seriously as a contribution to local historiography and are reprinted here. There is nothing in Beck's text to suggest firsthand consulting of Chouteau's papers, but neither has he anything to say in detail about the opening years of St. Louis. The very slight information about the earliest days is from Pittman; some of the later colonial material is from Benton and Paxton.

Next to offer passing comments were a missionary and a Prince. Edward Hollister, "recently returned" to Massachusetts from a missionary tour in Illinois and Missouri, on 15 November 1822 wrote to the editor of the *Christian Spectator* describing his experiences in the far west. His bit of information about the founding of St. Louis was clearly from Paxton.¹⁶

15. [Thomas H. Benton], *Abridgment of the Debates of Congress from 1789 to 1856* (16 volumes, New York, Appleton, 1858), VII, 176-180.

16. *Christian Spectator*, V (January, 1823), 21. "The next settlement worthy of notice was made at St. Louis in 1764, by Mr. Peter de Laclede Ligest. He made his establishment for the purposes of trade, having obtained of the French Authorities at New Orleans the exclusive privilege of the Indian trade on the Missouri river. He gave the town its present name in honor of Louis XV. then king of France." The details about Dubourg's library, the paintings in the cathedral, the statistics on

The summary of the first six years by Prince Paul of Württemberg sounds very much as if it could have come from his talks with Chouteau in 1823. Certainly there are facts presented which are not to be found in Paxton or Beck. Nevertheless, the influences are not entirely clear, for his book was not published until 1835; there are indications in it that he was familiar with both Stoddard and Beck.¹⁷

Important in the chronological sequence are the several depositions made by Auguste Chouteau before Theodore Hunt, Recorder of Land Titles, in 1825. Four of these statements have been selected for reproduction here, since in them we have again the testimony of the co-founder of the town. Their importance becomes clear when we read Primm's and later accounts. As public records they were frequently consulted.¹⁸

In 1828 Timothy Flint published in Cincinnati *A Condensed Geography and History of the Western States, or the Mississippi Valley*. The information presented in a passage on St. Louis is obviously derived from Stoddard: "St. Louis was founded in 1764, by Pierre LaClade, Maxan and company. . . . It was conceived to be a favorable point for centering the fur and Indian trade of the upper and lower Missouri and Mississippi. Among the first and most respectable settlers was M. Choteau, a name still very respectable in the country." Flint then referred to a "large accession of inhabitants" from the eastern bank in 1766 and to *l'année du coup* and the subsequent fortification of the town. Aside from matter and phrasing, Flint (as others do) demonstrates his indebtedness by the perpetuation of the typographical error in Stoddard: *LaClade*. There is no indication that Flint had used his own

lawyers and physicians, etc., all show definitely that Hollister was using Paxton.

17. *First Journey to North America*, 210 ff.

18. E.g., among many, "The Settlement of St. Louis," signed "X" in the *Missouri Republican*, 6 March 1854, for which the writer consulted "some old tomes of affidavits in the office of my friend Capt. Renard, the Recorder of Land Titles."

original opportunities to learn at first hand the story of the town.¹⁹

A brief, but quite important, contribution to this record was published in the *St. Louis Beacon* on 24 January 1831. (It is reprinted here.) "A Creole," annoyed by incorrect statements about the founding of the place, was driven to write a correct one. It is very obviously drawn from the "Narrative" of Auguste Chouteau and is the first detailed statement in print of the establishment of St. Louis.

In the fall of this same year Caleb Atwater brought out in Columbus, Ohio, his *Remarks Made on a Tour to Prairie du Chien . . . in 1829*. He had spent more than two weeks in St. Louis during June, 1829, and devoted seventeen pages of his book to an account of the town. But, alas! the historical portion was cribbed without the slightest acknowledgement. Word for word, comma for comma, it was "A Creole's" sketch in the *Beacon*.²⁰

About this time Wilson Primm, who on his mother's side was local French, was preparing a talk on the early history of St. Louis. The young lawyer delivered his lecture before the St. Louis Lyceum, probably in December, 1831. His purpose was serious and scholarly. He was not doing anything so casual as a contribution to a useful work of reference or a letter to a newspaper; he was undertaking for the first time to bring together the authentic story of the town. Auguste Chouteau's depositions in *Hunt's Minutes* served as primary source for

19. II, 108-109. Nor does he make any comment of interest in his *Recollections of the Last Ten Years . . . in the Valley of the Mississippi* (Boston, 1826).

20. Pp. 40-42. It is to be found also in later editions of Atwater's works. The "Creole's" story in the *Beacon*, like many another contribution to a newspaper, would soon have been forgotten and without influence had it not been for this plagiarizing. But Atwater quickly became recognized as an authority on western history and antiquities and was widely read and quoted; consequently whoever quoted Atwater was perpetuating the "Creole's" account. Another typographical error—this time a misplaced comma—immediately betrays indebtedness to the "Creole" on the part of any writer who "borrowed" from Atwater: "Pierre Laclede, Ligeste, Maxant and Co."

the events of the first years, but curiously enough Primm, while accepting Chouteau's other testimony, rejected his statement that LaClède had sent him at the head of the party of workmen to begin work on the settlement on 15 February 1764.

In the several sketches of the history of St. Louis, which have appeared in the public papers, the honor of having founded it, is awarded to Mr. Auguste Chouteau. These statements, uncontroverted as they have been, have caused the belief which generally prevails, that he was the founder. The writer risks something, no doubt, in opposing it, but the task he has assumed, of presenting not only a history of this town, but a *correct* one, constrains him to do it. The evidence, at least, which opposes this popular belief, is so strong, as to vindicate the writer from the implication of wishing to pluck from the brow of merit, the chaplet of honor, and the feelings of delicacy, which, under other circumstances, might be indulged, must now be laid aside.

He proceeded therefore to interview aged French residents, "most of whom [had] been born within ten or fifteen years after the foundation of the town. They knew nothing *personally* [he discovered], but all concurred in saying that Mr. Laclède was the founder; that Mr. Chouteau, was a boy, when the town was founded." Though this tradition was "strong evidence," Primm did not find it sufficient. He next called on old Mme. Lecompt, who had been eighteen years old, married, and was living at Cahokia at the time St. Louis was founded; this witness, we are assured, "though very aged, blind, and almost deprived of the use of her limbs, still retains the faculties of her mind, strong and unimpaired." He inquired also of Mrs. Brazeau, a lady "remarkable for her piety, intelligence, and amiable disposition," who had been eleven or twelve years old at the time of her first visit to St. Louis just after it was begun. Two other (unnamed) persons made statements similar to those of the ladies interviewed. Finally, the newspaper obituary for Chouteau was cited. The weighty conclusion of this amassed evidence? That Auguste Chouteau "was fifteen

years old at the foundation of the city"—a fact, Primm concludes, "which, in our opinion, settles the question." One may wonder how this all disproves Chouteau's statement that LaClède had placed him in charge of the workmen sent in February and how it proves that LaClède himself led that party.²¹ Once Primm had settled, to his own satisfaction, this point of controversy, his story runs smoothly; he gives a detailed account of the attack of St. Louis in 1780 and relates other incidents that add to our knowledge and vivify our impressions of colonial days. His essay was published in the April and May, 1832, numbers of the *Illinois Monthly Magazine*. It is reprinted here.²²

James Hall was one of the most prolific writers of the West during the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Among other books which his lively interest produced was *Sketches of History, Life, and Manners in the West*, published in 1835. A chapter on the "Founding of St. Louis" should from his hand have been a valuable and understanding piece of work, but it proves only a journalist's hasty use of another man's research. It is directly lifted from Primm—every detail is from the St. Louis writer. Halfway through, Hall made one feeble acknowledgment of his indebtedness: in relating the Beausoleil incident he said he would tell it as "I found it in an excellent article on the history of St. Louis, from which I have already quoted liberally." The quotations, however (as was not unusual at the time), were without benefit of quotation marks. Nor was the writer identified.²³

21. After all, it is not beyond belief that a fourteen-year-old boy should be placed in charge of such a work-party. Certainly, Primm's witnesses are not more worthy of credence than is Chouteau. Positive proof there is none, since Chouteau's is the only account of the founding.

22. While Primm was at work on his essay, the editor of the *View of the Valley of the Mississippi, or the Emigrant's and Traveller's Guide to the West* was gathering material for his book (Philadelphia, 1832). His only historical statement showed another reader of Stoddard: "This city was founded in 1764, by Pierre Laclade, Maxan and Company" (p. 245).

23. Two volumes, Philadelphia, Harrison Hall; St. Louis, Meech & Dinnies; 1835. I, 165-182. Like the "Creole" Primm found a much larger

In 1836 Edmund Flagg came to St. Louis. Two years later in *The Far West* he published a pleasant series of impressions of St. Louis and its vicinity. As a journalist, in addition to his own observations he made use of available printed sources, but without specifying them and without setting off his borrowed sentences by the conventional marks. His account of the early days of St. Louis has little that can be called original: he echoes earlier writers:

The site upon which stands St. Louis was selected in 1763 by M. Laclede, a partner of a mercantile association at New Orleans, to whom D'Abbadie, Director-general of the province of Louisiana, had granted the exclusive privilege of the commerce in furs and peltries with the Indian tribes of the Upper Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. By the treaty of that year France had ceded all her possessions east of the Mississippi to Great Britain, and there was on the western shore only the small village of Ste. Genevieve. This was subsequently deemed too distant from the mouth of the Mississippi [*sic*] to be a suitable depôt and post for the fur-trade; and Laclede, having surveyed all the neighboring region, fixed on the spot where St. Louis now stands as a more eligible site. . . . On the 15th of February, 1764, Colonel Auguste Chouteau, with a number of persons from Ste. Genevieve, Cahokia, and Fort Chartres, arrived at the spot, and commenced a settlement by felling a splendid grove of forest-trees which then reared itself upon the bank, and erecting a building where the market-house now stands. The town was laid off, and named in honor of Louis XV . . . though the settlers were desirous of giving it the name of its founder: to this Laclede would not consent."²⁴

Another brief and unpretentious "Sketch of Saint Louis" was printed in Charles Keemle's *St. Louis Directory for 1836-'37*. Keemle, a twenty-year resident of St. Louis, veteran newspaperman and one-time fur trader, had been editor of the

circle of readers through his plagiarizer than through the *Illinois Monthly Magazine*, for Hall's book became a "must" for travelers and writers on the West.

24. Reprinted by R. G. Thwaites. (ed.) in *Early Western Travels*, XXVI, 145-148.

Beacon when "A Creole's" contribution was published. His own little sketch, adequate to the immediate purpose, does not make any contribution to knowledge of the period covered. Undoubtedly, it was based upon sources already in print; the key statement about LaClède leading the party on 15 February is from Primm. The sketch was reprinted, slightly enlarged for the later years, in his *Directory for 1838-'39*.

Keemle's old friend and more than once his fellow editor, Alphonso Wetmore, who had first come west two decades earlier as an army paymaster, produced a *Gazetteer of Missouri* in 1837. The lengthy historical sketch of St. Louis he compiled was extracted (with acknowledgments) from Stoddard, Beck, and other writers. His contribution was merely that of an editor drawing useful information into one place.²⁵

Two travelers in 1840 were sufficiently interested to include in their books statements about the history of the town they were visiting. Mrs. Eliza Steele obviously depended on Levasseur.²⁶ James Silk Buckingham, however, was a professional traveler and lecturer who was intent on picking up all authentic detail possible to swell future talks and books. He discovered that

St. Louis owes its origin to the enterprize of a French Trading Company, to whom the Governor of Louisiana had granted, about the year 1763, the exclusive privilege of trading with the Indians of the Upper Mississippi and the Missouri, from the mouth of the latter river, up to that of St. Peter's, near the Falls of St. Anthony. The head and director of this com-

25. Pp. 194-214. The paragraph on the founding probably was drawn from Pittman. A lengthy review (mostly extracts) of the *Gazetteer* appeared in the *North American Review* for April, 1839 (XLVIII, 514-526); it was copied by the St. Louis *Daily Evening Gazette*, 12, 18 May 1840.

26. *A Summer Journey in the West* (New York, 1841), 197. "The founder, M. Auguste Choteau, was alive when La Fayette visited here, but very aged. When young, enterprising and ardent, he led the expedition which in seventeen hundred and sixty four ascended the river to found a city. He selected the site and with his own axe struck down the first tree."

pany was Mons. Pierre Laclede; this gentleman, ascending the river from New Orleans to the junction of the Missouri with the Mississippi, and finding no suitable place existing there, as a *dépôt* for his commodities of trade, selected the spot where St. Louis now stands, as combining the greatest number of advantages for his new settlement—good soil, fine timber, rising grounds, and sufficient proximity to the point of union between the two great rivers along whose borders his future commercial operations were to be conducted.

To effect, in this spot, the foundation of a town, and at the same time to protect those who were to be engaged in the erection of the necessary buildings, he employed his young friend, who had accompanied him in most of his trading expeditions, Colonel Choteau, with a competent number of armed men, to guard the position, as well as to assist in the labour; and on the 15th of February, 1764, the first house was erected near the river's bank.

Encouragement being given, by Mons. Laclede, to settlers to come from other parts, his little colony was soon augmented by persons from the older settlements of Kaskaskia, Vincennes, Cahokia, and Fort Chartres, and in the course of a single year, the number of inhabitants amounted to upwards of 500. These were all desirous of having the town called after its founder and proprietor, Laclede; but he insisted upon its being called St. Louis, in honour of the French sovereign, of whom they were then all subjects. . . .²⁷

In the spring of 1842 Chambers and Knapp, publishers of the *Missouri Republican*, brought out the *Saint Louis Directory for the Year 1842*.²⁸ As a preface, a "Sketch of St. Louis" was offered (pages iii-xii) which drew liberally on Primm and likewise quoted extensively from Brackenridge's 1811 contributions to the *Missouri Gazette* (the files of which the publishers owned). Apparently this sketch was first published in the *Missouri Republican*. There is nothing in this little piece

27. *The Eastern and Western States of America* (3 volumes, London, Fisher, [1842]), III, 115-116.

28. From references in the *Republican* it seems probable that this directory was published late in April or early in May.

that is new, but it gains interest because it provoked an answer, to which I shall presently come.

That most interesting St. Louis imprint, *The Valley of the Mississippi Illustrated*, in addition to John Caspar Wild's lithographs of western scenes, carried descriptive letterpress by Lewis F. (and, later, J. E.) Thomas. The first number, published in July, 1841, contained a seven-page "Sketch of St. Louis, Missouri."²⁹ The opening page and a half, devoted to the early days, was almost certainly summarized from Primm. By the time the ninth number was issued in May, 1842, the editor found himself involved in controversy. Objections had been raised both to the first statement in the *Valley Illustrated* and to Chambers' sketch. Thomas's solution was to re-state the original position, quote a letter written to the *Republican* (contradicting Primm), and to offer as evidence of "sufficient importance . . . bearing on this point" a paragraph from Atwater!³⁰

The letter in the *Republican* had been written by a person who remains unknown, but he definitely belonged to the "Creole's" faction.

To the Editor of the Missouri Republican:

Last evening I read with much pleasure your "Sketch of St. Louis," in yesterday's *Republican*³¹ . . . but I perceive that you have been led to make a mis-statement of facts in extracting a paragraph from the "History of St. Louis" prepared for the Lyceum.

It is therein stated that Mr. De Laclede, "having fixed upon a site, returned to Fort Chartres, from whence he started again in the beginning of the month of February, 1764, with men

29. Pp. 8-14.

30. Pp. 135-137.

31. Thomas gave no dates for this letter in the *Republican* or for the previous publication there of Chambers' sketch. The latter has not been located; the available file of the *Republican* is badly clipped. That Chambers' sketch and the preface to the *Directory* are identical is shown by the fact that the key sentences this letter-writer objects to in Chambers are to be found also in the *Directory*.

whom he had brought with him from New Orleans, a few from Ste. Genevieve, and from the Fort," &c. And a little further it states "on the 15th Feb., 1764, they (Mr. De Laclede and his men) reached the place of destination, proceeded to cut down the trees and draw the line of the town," &c.

Now I am well informed that those are not the facts, but that the following is the correct history:

After Mr. De Laclede had, in company with the late Col. Auguste Chouteau, selected the spot for the new establishment, he returned to Fort Chartres, from whence he despatched a keel boat, under the direction of Col. Auguste Chouteau (who was then, though young, his assistant), for the purpose of commencing the new establishment, and at the same time returned to New Orleans himself, where he remained some years. He never revisited St. Louis after having selected the site. He died in 1778 in Arkansas, on his way from New Orleans to St. Louis.

Agreeably to instructions, Col. Auguste Chouteau started from Fort Chartres with his keel boat, and arrived at the place of destination on the 13th of February, 1763 [*sic*], and "proceeded to cut down trees," and built the first house in the place, which the old market square now occupies; and it was he who drew the line of the Town—a plat whereof is now on record.

I would be the last person to attempt to rob Mr. De Laclede of the honor of having selected the site of St. Louis, but at the same time I would like that facts should appear as they happened.

The best of the early accounts of St. Louis was written by Joseph N. Nicollet in 1842; like Primm's it is an authentic attempt to write history. Nicollet's acquaintance with Henry Chouteau, the third son of the late Colonel Auguste Chouteau, began in Washington in 1834 and was renewed in St. Louis a year later. During the years that followed, the French explorer had ready access to the Chouteau papers. Whether he carried any of these documents east in 1839 or they were sent to him in Baltimore cannot be proved. What is certain from his own statements is that he did use the original manuscripts. His story is richer in detail than any other up to that moment

and this detail apparently comes chiefly from the Chouteau papers. It is reprinted here.³²

After Nicollet and before the publication of Edwards' *Great West and Her Commercial Metropolis* in 1860 the most interesting recounting of the early history is one that probably does not exist. Edward Bates arrived in St. Louis in 1814; for a month he lived with the elder Pierre Chouteau and always afterwards he had intimate contact with the French element of the town as well as with the American. In 1845 he delivered before the Young Men's Centenary Society a lecture on "St. Louis: its origin, history, and prospects." He acknowledged "vast assistance . . . from the ample earlier facts collected by Wilson Primm, Esq." The more original portion of his address apparently consisted of a description of St. Louis as he first saw the town and his impressions of the character of its early inhabitants. All this, however, is known only from reports in the newspapers: Bates had not written out his address for publication. Two years later at the dinner in celebration of the anniversary of the founding of St. Louis he again delivered an address in which he "alluded to many incidents of the early history of the country." The *Republican* did not include this speech in its lengthy report on the celebration but promised "to give it in another form"; however, there is no indication that it was published in any of the city

32. Nicollet made one error that is repeated by writers who "borrowed" from him: "Mr. Laclède was accompanied [from New Orleans] by two young Creoles of New Orleans, Auguste and Pierre Chouteau . . . in whom he reposed the greatest confidence. . . . Mr. Laclède gave the command of his boat [in February, 1764] to Auguste, the elder of the two brothers. . . ." The odd thing is that the younger of these brothers was about five years and ten months old in August, 1763, when LaClède left New Orleans for the Illinois and also that he did not come to St. Louis (according to his own deposition in *Hunt's Minutes*) until six months after its foundation—it is certain that he was still in New Orleans on 9 May 1764, for on that day he served as godfather to his youngest sister.

papers or in pamphlet form. Nor is there a manuscript copy in the available papers of the Bates family.³³

Two more directories have place in this survey. W. D. Skillman in *The Western Metropolis or St. Louis in 1846* (pages 60-78) reprinted Nicollet's essay, slightly condensed; the omissions and the occasional alteration of phrase prevent its being a true copy of the original publication. The next year in the *St. Louis Business Directory for 1847 containing the History of St. Louis from the Period of its First Settlement down to the Present Time* there was published "An Historical Account of St. Louis—French Era—From 1763-4 to 1768" (pages 17-21). It was drawn chiefly from Atwater (he was twice acknowledged in footnotes); here then is the "Creole's" version once more.

On the occasion of the famous celebration of 1847 Wilson Primm was invited to be the orator of the day. The speech that he delivered was essentially his 1831 "History of St. Louis." He enlarged his introduction, re-arranged some of his materials, made one or two corrections of his previous statements, and added some detail of facts and conditions in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Some of the livelier passages in the early lectures, however, he now relegated to notes in the published version of the "Oration."³⁴

33. The fullest reports of Bates' lecture (delivered on the 20th) were those in the *Saint Louis American*, 24 February 1845, and the *St. Louis Weekly Reveille*, 24 February 1845, p. 257. Almost certainly Bates' account was a "talk," not a "paper."

34. *Report of the Celebration of the Anniversary of the Founding of St. Louis, on the Fifteenth Day of February, A. D. 1847. Prepared for the Missouri Republican* (St. Louis, Chambers & Knapp, 1847), 6-13. In his introductory remarks he "re-claimed" his earlier essay: "Before proceeding to my task, I may, without impropriety, observe, that many of the facts which will be presented to you, relative to the early days of St. Louis, are taken from a lecture, which in the year 1831, I had the honor to deliver before the St. Louis Lyceum. This lecture having been copied and embodied into several of the literary periodicals and sketch books of that time, without mention of the author's name, has prompted me to make this remark, so that, at least, no charge of plagiarism, or literary piracy, can honestly be made against me."

In 1850 John Mason Peck (for more than thirty years a resident of the vicinity of St. Louis) undertook the revision of the *Annals of the West* that James H. Perkins of Cincinnati had published in 1846. "For our authority [wrote Peck], concerning the appearance of the site of St. Louis and the aspect of the river, we are indebted to the late Auguste Chouteau, Sen., and several other inhabitants of St. Louis, who were living thirty years since." Peck's brief account, nevertheless, is summarized from Primm.³⁵

The year 1854 saw published three more accounts of early days. The first of these appeared in the *Missouri Republican* on 10 January 1854 and was republished as a pamphlet. No sources were cited. It is obviously a journalistic compilation from the available sketches of Primm, Nicollet, and the various portions of the report of the celebration of 1847. It continues the error of sending six-year-old Pierre Chouteau along with LaClède and Auguste Chouteau. The latter half of this account, dealing with nineteenth century matters, has some value as a contribution to St. Louis historiography.³⁶

The next sketch to be noted in this year is again a disappointment. It was written, probably in 1854, by Edmund Flagg for a picture book called *The United States Illustrated*, edited by Charles A. Dana. It recapitulates at greater length what Flagg had set down nearly twenty years earlier in *The Far West*. There is nothing concerning colonial days in this chapter that cannot be found in the already printed accounts, nor are any sources mentioned. In spite of a number of errors, Flagg produced a good enough piece of journalism, but he did not make any contribution to the early history of St. Louis.³⁷

About this same time the first fascicules of another pictorial

35. Pp. 121-123.

36. *Annual Review. History of St. Louis, Commercial Statistics, Improvements of the Year, and Account of the Leading Manufactories, &c., from the Missouri Republican of January 10, 1854*, St. Louis, 1854.

37. Flagg's account appears in Volume I, *The West; or, the States of the Mississippi Valley, and the Pacific*, pp. 102-128.

work were published in Düsseldorf. Henry Lewis, English-born artist who had lived in St. Louis for a dozen years, in 1849 began touring the United States with his immense panorama of the Mississippi River. His travels with it led him to Europe and presently he settled down in the art colony in Düsseldorf. There he arranged to do a series of plates for a volume entitled *Das Illustrierte Mississippithal*, the letterpress of which was prepared either by himself or by George Douglas. The account of St. Louis is condensed from Nicollet's essay, but it actually makes use of many of his sentences, word for word—without, of course, any acknowledgment.³⁸

A novel variant appeared in Taylor and Crooks' *Sketch Book of Saint Louis: Containing a Series of Sketches of the Early Settlement, Public Buildings . . .* in 1858. The writers echo Chouteau's "Narrative" (which was probably in print before this book), Primm's essay, and the other earlier accounts. They may have had no new facts to add to the story of the founding of St. Louis, but they were sure they had imagination. So they reconstructed that important day in December when the site of the future great city was selected:

It was on one of those dark, gusty days, that so often clothe, in a western clime, the latter portions of November with a penumbral mistiness, that a party of boatmen, caroling in native sweetness their sweet and simple songs, might have been seen winding around the point of what is now known as Duncan's Island. The day throughout had assumed all of the fantastic ebullitions of passion and change, that mark the everchanging footsteps of some spoiled, yet beautiful coquette. One moment suffused with the sweet smiles of love and tenderness, with the dimpling sunshine resting in playfulness on the cheek, an hour of rest too long to last, the frenzy of madness seizes on the brain, and all within is dark and gloomy, with sudden drifts of clouds flitting as shadows along the sunshine of life. So had been the day; one moment, all of the rich glow of an Indian summer, and all of its mild warmth, smiled

38. Reprint edition (J. Christian Bay, ed.), Leipzig, 1923, 5-17.

the affections of love on the earth, to be succeeded by fitful gusts of wind, cheerless and disconsolate. Many had been the changes that had passed along the earth that day. The distant thunder, as it rumbled along its fold of clouds, and the rain-drops, as they pattered on the half withered flowers below, were all succeeded too soon by the rich gorgeousness of an autumnal sky. Such was the day, and such the scene, on the banks of the mighty Mississippi, on the 9th of December, 1763.

The party who were now sending forth their songs of joy were none others than Pierre de Laclede and half a dozen sturdy voyageurs. . . .³⁹

One more interested and intelligent traveler is to be cited. The Abbé Em. Domenech, after spending seven years in ethnological pursuits in western America, returned to France and in 1860 published *Seven Years' Residence in the Great Desert of North America*. In the course of his travels he had visited St. Louis and he devoted ten pages to an account of the colonial decades. His information for this period is drawn from Nicollet.⁴⁰

In 1860 Richard Edwards and M. Hopewell produced that curious volume called *The Great West and Her Commercial Metropolis*—the first book-length history of St. Louis. Its authors went far beyond journalism or lecture in their effort to produce a detailed and authentic story of the city from its founding to date. They searched newspaper files and legal records. They interviewed many citizens. They gathered all that had gone into print before their time. But the story of the founding of St. Louis was still Chouteau's and their acknowledged chief source was Chouteau's "Narrative."

Through all these attempts to write the early history of St. Louis the common thread is the Chouteau "Narrative" and other details derived from the papers of the "venerable colonel." Auguste Chouteau not merely made a place for

39. Pp. 9-10.

40. French and English editions of this work appeared almost at the same time. I have used the London edition (2 volumes, Longmans, 1860), I, 310-320.

himself as the co-founder of the town and one of its most notable citizens but also as the most influential of its early historians.

A Chronology for the Early History of St. Louis

1729

22 November. Pierre LaClède born in Bedous, Bearn, France.

1762

3 November. Treaty of Fontainbleau, providing secretly for the transfer of Louisiana to Spain, signed by French and Spanish Ministers (Villiers du Terrage, *Les Dernières Années de la Louisiane Français*, 154).

13 November. Treaty of Fontainebleau accepted by Charles III of Spain (*Ibid.*, 155).

1763

10 February. Definitive treaty with Spain signed. Instructions prepared this day for D'Abbadie provided only for the transfer of the eastern portion of Louisiana to England. D'Abbadie not informed of cession to Spain (*Ibid.*, 156-159).

29 June. D'Abbadie arrived at New Orleans (*Ibid.*, 159).

6 July. Maxent, LaClède and Company at New Orleans granted by D'Abbadie the exclusive privilege of the Indian trade of the Missouri River and of the Mississippi from the Illinois Country to the mouth of the St. Peters (Minnesota) River (McDermott, "The Exclusive Trade Privilege of Maxent, LaClède and Company," 12).

3 August. Pierre LaClède, accompanied by Auguste Chouteau, departed New Orleans for the Illinois Country to establish trading post for company (Chouteau's "Narrative").
But note:

- 10 August. On this day at New Orleans LaClède, about to leave for the Illinois, executed a power of attorney in favor of Nicolas Forstall (Records of the Superior Council of Louisiana, Doc. No. 8438, Cabildo, New Orleans).
- 23 October. D'Abbadie formally took over government from Kerlérec (Villiers du Terrage, 162).
- 3 November. LaClède arrived at Ste. Genevieve (Chouteau).
- 6 November. LaClède bid at sale of Jesuit property at Kaskaskia (*Illinois Historical Collections*, X, 127, 131).
- December. LaClède, accompanied by Auguste Chouteau, selected site for company trading post (Chouteau).

1764

- 30 January. D'Abbadie sent order to Neyon de Villiers, commanding at Fort Chartres, to evacuate the Illinois Country; troops to be recalled from Vincennes, Fort Massac (Marsiacque), and the forts among the Peoria and the Kansas Indians. (Villiers du Terrage, 177, 190, n.2; Chouteau).
- 10 February. LaClède sent Chouteau from Fort Chartres in charge of party of men to start work on trading post (Chouteau).
- 14 February. Chouteau and his men arrived at site (Chouteau).
- 15 February. Trees felled and building begun at site of St. Louis (Chouteau). [In the manuscript of the "Narrative" the word *mars* is written over the word *fevrier* as if in correction. However, in his testimony in 1825 Chouteau specified February as the month in which work was begun. Furthermore, every early reference which mentions a date gives 15 February. It is particularly significant that Paxton, the "Creole," and Nicollet, who all had access to Chouteau's papers, cite this date. Note also that Neyon de Villiers, writing to D'Abbadie on 13 March

1764, said LaClède had already begun to clear land: "J'ai l'honneur de Vous rendre compte que depuis mes Dernieres Depêches, le Sr. La Clede nous a présenté Une requête tendant a ce qu'il Luy soit permis de Former un Etablissement de L'autre costé du mississipy, y speci-
fiant qu'il ade Vous permission Verbale d'en former un ou Il jugera Estre plus avantageux, ce qu'il a fait, Dumoins leprojet, et En Conséquence Il a fait mettre hache en Bois" (*Favrot Papers*, I, 49, mimeograph edition prepared by Historical Records Survey, Louisiana State Museum, New Orleans, 1940).]

- 12 April. Pontiac arrived at Fort Chartres (*Illinois Historical Collections*, X, 242). After a council held on 15-17 April Pontiac departed incognito (*Favrot Papers*, I, 51-57).
- 20 April. Neyon de Villiers reported to D'Abbadie that he had ordered St. Ange to withdraw to Fort Chartres (*Illinois Historical Collections*, X, 243).
- 21 April. Letter announcing session of western Louisiana to Spain dispatched this day from Versailles to D'Abbadie in New Orleans (Villiers du Terrage, 195-196).
- 15 June. Neyon de Villiers departed for New Orleans, leaving Louis St. Ange de Bellerive in command at Fort Chartres (Villiers du Terrage, 190; *Illinois Historical Collections*, X, 189).
- 1 July. Pontiac left Fort Chartres, after visit to St. Ange following departure of Neyon de Villiers (Peckham, *Pontiac*, 252).
- 10 September. D'Abbadie received this day from France news of cession of Louisiana to Spain and instructions for its transfer (Villiers du Terrage, 194).
- 10 October. Missouri Indians visited St. Louis and were persuaded by LaClède to go back to their village (Nicollet).

1765

- 4 February. Death of D'Abbadie at New Orleans (Villiers du Terrage, 200-201).
- 8 April. Pontiac arrived at Fort Chartres (Peckham, 269).
- July. Pontiac left Illinois Country (Peckham, 283).
- 9 October. Captain Thomas Stirling arrived at Fort Chartres by way of Ohio and Mississippi Rivers (*Illinois Historical Collections*, XI, 107).
- 10 October. St. Ange delivered Fort Chartres to Stirling (*Illinois Historical Collections*, XI, 91 ff.).
- 23 October. St. Ange, on orders from Aubry, Commandant of Louisiana, withdrew to St. Louis (*Illinois Historical Collections*, XI, 123). At this time St. Louis had about 50 families (*Ibid.*, 125).

1766

- March. Ulloa, arriving in New Orleans as first Spanish governor, retained St. Ange as commandant of the Illinois Country (Kinnaird, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, I, 59).
- 1 April. First concession entered in *Livre Terrien*.

1767

- ——— In this year Clement Delor de Treget settled below St. Louis. His establishment known variously as Delor's Village, Catalan's Prairie, and Louisbourg, but commonly called Vide Poche (Houck, *History of Missouri*, II, 64). (Re-named Carondelet for the Governor of Louisiana (probably in 1792).
- 7 January. Secret orders issued at New Orleans for the construction of two forts at the mouth of the Missouri. Francisco Riu y Morales named military and civil commandant for the district of the Missouri, St. Ange remaining as commandant of the western part of the Illinois—St. Louis and Ste. Genevieve (Houck, *Spanish Regime*, I, 20 ff.).

9 September. Riu arrived at St. Louis on the way to mouth of Missouri (Houck, *Spanish Regime*, I, 39).

1769

— — — — — Louis Blanchette settled on the Missouri River; around him developed the village of Les Petites Côtes. In 1790, Perez reported, St. Charles was chosen for patron of church and town (Kinnaird, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, II, 378).

10 March. Riu at the Missouri relieved by Pedro Piernas and returned to New Orleans (Houck, *Spanish Regime*, I, 49). Piernas had reached St. Louis on 30 February and Fort Don Carlos 6 March (*Ibid.*, I, 67).

19 March. Piernas received orders from Ulloa dated 30 October 1768 for the evacuation of forts at the Missouri and to deliver them to

20 March. St. Ange, who with Volsey and others, arrived from St. Louis, and on

28 March. Piernas transferred forts and supplies to St. Ange (Houck, *Spanish Regime*, I, 69. Shortly thereafter Piernas with his command returned to New Orleans.

20 April. Pontiac murdered at Cahokia (Peckham, 311).

23 November. Oath of allegiance to Spain taken by seventy St. Louisans (*Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, IV [1921], 205-208).

1770

17 February. Office of lieutenant-governor for the districts of Illinois and Missouri established and instruction for drawn up (Houck, *Spanish Regime*, I, 76 ff.).

1 March. Piernas nominated by O'Reilly for lieutenant-governor of the Illinois (Houck, *Spanish Regime*, I, 110).

18 June. Piernas at St. Louis takes over from St. Ange (Kinnaird, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, I, 190).

1774

26 December. St. Ange died at St. Louis.

1775

19 May. Francisco Cruzat succeeded Piernas as lieutenant-governor (Houck, *Spanish Regime*, I, 126).

1778

14 June. Fernando de Leyba succeeded Cruzat (Houck, *Spanish Regime*, I, 161).

20 June. LaClède died near mouth of Arkansas River.

22 July. About this date George Rogers Clark visited De Leyba at St. Louis (Kinnaird, "Clark-Leyba Papers," 98-99).

1780

26 May. Indian attack on St. Louis.

28 June. Death of Fernando de Leyba. Francisco Cartabona de Oro, Commandant of Ste. Genevieve, acting lieutenant-governor.

24 September. Cruzat, reappointed lieutenant-governor 25 July, relieved Cartabona (Houck, *Spanish Regime*, I, 198).

1782

— March. Madame Cruzat, Labadie, Pourée and others captured by river pirates Colbert and McGillivray (Houck, *Spanish Regime*, I, 211-24). [Pourée died in St. Louis 30 April 1783 (Houck, *History of Missouri* II, 44-46).]

1785

6 June. Cruzat reported on flood (Houck, *Spanish Regime*, I, 235-236).

1786

— ——— Florissant founded (Gilbert J. Garraghan, S.J., *Saint Ferdinand de Florissant* [Chicago, Loyola University Press, 1923], 18-20). St. Ferdinand chosen as patron of church and village (Perez reported) in June, 1790 (Kinnaird, *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, III, 377).

1787

27 November. Manuel Perez succeeded Cruzat at lieutenant-governor (Houck, *Spanish Regime*, I, 258 ff.).

1789

— ——— Auguste Chouteau bought LaClède's building, enlarged it, and lived in it until his death. [House razed in 1841 after death of his widow.]

1792

17 July. Zenon Trudeau succeeded Perez as lieutenant-governor (Houck, *Spanish Regime*, II, 265).

1797

— February. Carlos Howard arrived at St. Louis as military commandant of Upper Louisiana, under secret orders to protect St. Louis against a threatened British attack and to destroy the British trade on the Missouri and the Upper Mississippi. In addition to troops he had under his command a number of gunboats patrolling the Mississippi (Houck, *Spanish Regime*, II, 123-139, 218-219).

1799

— ——— Portage des Sioux established by François Saucier (Houck, *History of Missouri*, II, 88).

29 July. Charles de Hault de Lassus succeeded Trudeau as lieutenant-governor of Upper Louisiana (Houck, *Spanish Regime*, II, 267).

1800

1 October. Secret retrocession of Louisiana to France (Villiers du Terrage, 375).

1803

30 April. Louisiana Purchase treaty drawn up. Ratified by Congress 26, 29 October.

1804

9 March. Amos Stoddard at St. Louis took possession of Upper Louisiana for France and on

10 March. Stoddard took possession for the United States (Stoddard to Secretary of War, St. Louis, 10 March 1804).

26 March. Upper Louisiana by act of Congress created Louisiana District (Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIII, 51). All this area north of 33° attached to Indiana Territory for administrative purposes.

1 October. William Henry Harrison, Governor of Indiana Territory and the District of Louisiana, subdivided the latter into five districts and named Colonel Samuel Hammond commandant of the District of St. Louis (Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIII, 51).

14-17 October. Harrison arrived in St. Louis between these dates to stay more than three weeks on his first official visit.

16 November. Charles de Lassus and the Spanish troops departed St. Louis (Delassus Papers, Missouri Historical Society).

1805

3 March. Louisiana Territory established (Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIII, 92-95).

4 July. General James Wilkinson took office at St. Louis as governor of Louisiana Territory (Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIII, 95, 155).

1806

16 August. James Browne, Acting Governor (Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIV, 3).

1807

3 March. Meriwether Lewis commissioned governor (Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIV, 107).

7 April. Frederick Bates, Acting Governor (Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIV, 117).

1808

8 March. Meriwether Lewis took office as governor (Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIV, 171).

1809

4 September. Frederick Bates, acting Governor (Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIV, 323).

9 November. Incorporation of St. Louis as town (van Ravenswaay, 72).

1810

18 April. Benjamin Howard commissioned governor. He arrived at St. Louis and took office 17 September (Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIV, 403).

1812

4 June. Territory of Missouri created (Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIV, 552).

1813

16 June. William Clark took office as governor (Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XIV, 679).

1821

10 August. Missouri admitted as state.

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*Narrative of the
Settlement
of St. Louis*

by

Auguste Chouteau

On the death of Auguste Chouteau, 24 February 1829, his papers passed into the hands of his son Henry and on the death of the latter in the Gasconade disaster of 1 November 1855, Gabriel, the second son of Auguste, came into possession of them. Among other documents Gabriel found a fragment of a narrative or journal in the handwriting of his father which related the story of the settlement of St. Louis. This fragment of seven folios or fourteen pages in French Gabriel Chouteau gave to the St. Louis Mercantile Library in 1857. A literal translation by J. Givin Brown and J. Wilmer Stith was published in the Twelfth Annual Report of the Board of Directors of the St. Louis Mercantile Library Association in January, 1858. The original manuscript remains in that library. The French original was published and the 1858 translation reprinted in the Missouri Historical Society Collections, IV, No. 4 (1911), 335-366; it was annotated by an unnamed editor (probably Judge Walter H. Douglas). The present copy is from the translation in the Twelfth Annual Report in which a few corrections have been made. For a discussion of the origin and extent of this "Narrative" see the introduction, pp. 9-11.

Narrative of the Settlement of St. Louis

In the year 1762, M. D'Abbadie, at that time Director General and Commandant of Louisiana, granted to a company the exclusive trade with the savages of the Missouri and all the nations residing west of the Mississippi, for the term of eight years. This company was formed under the name of Pre Laclede Liguete. Antoine Maxan and Company. Immediately after the terms and conditions were signed with the French Government, they took measures to import from Europe all the merchandise necessary to sustain, on a large scale, their commerce, which they proposed to extend as much as possible. While waiting for the arrival of the goods, which they had ordered in Europe, they formed a considerable armament, at the head of which was placed M. P. Laclede Liguete, known as a man of great merit, capable, from his experience of conducting with skill and prudence, the interests of the company. He left New Orleans the 3rd of August, 1763, and arrived in Illinois the 3rd of November following.

Observe, that all the establishments which the French had on the left bank of the Mississippi, were ceded to the English by the treaty of 1762, and that upon the right bank, which remained to the French, there was only the small village of Ste. Genevieve, in which M. de Laclede could not find a house capable of containing one-fourth of his merchandise. M. de Neyon, Commandant of Fort de Chartres, learning the embarrassment of M. de Laclede, sent an officer to him, to tell him that he could offer him a place for his goods, until the English should come to take possession. Necessity made him accept this generous offer of M. de Neyon. He left Ste. Genevieve, and

arrived at Fort Chartres on the 3rd of November, 1763, where he disembarked all his goods, and prepared immediately all the supplies for the different nations. After all the business of the trade was done, he occupied himself with the means of forming an establishment suitable for his commerce, Ste. Genevieve not suiting him, because of its distance from the Missouri, and its insalubrious situation. These reasons decided him to seek a more advantageous site. In consequence, he set out from the Fort de Chartres in the month of December, took with him a young man in his confidence, and examined all the ground from the Fort de Chartres to the Missouri. He was delighted to see the situation (where St. Louis at present stands); he did not hesitate a moment to form there the establishment that he proposed. Besides the beauty of the site, he found there all the advantages that one could desire to found a settlement which might become very considerable hereafter. After having examined all thoroughly, he fixed upon the place where he wished to form his settlement, marked with his own hand some trees, and said: "Chouteau, you will come here as soon as navigation opens, and will cause this place to be cleared, in order to form our settlement after the plan that I shall give you." We set out immediately afterwards, to return to Fort de Chartres, where he said, with enthusiasm, to Monsieur de Neyon, and to his officers that he had found a situation where he was going to form a settlement, which might become, hereafter, one of the finest cities of America—so many advantages were embraced in this site, by its locality and its central position, for forming settlements. He was occupied the rest of the winter in procuring all things necessary for the settlement—men, provisions, tools, &c.

Navigation being open in the early part of February, he fitted out a boat, in which he put thirty men—nearly all mechanics—and he gave the charge of it to Chouteau, and said to him: "You will land at the place where we marked the trees; you will commence to have the place cleared, and build

a large shed to contain the provisions and the tools, and some small cabins, to lodge the men. I give you two men on whom you can depend, who will aid you very much; and I will rejoin you before long." I arrived at the place designated on the 14th of February, and, on the morning of the next day, I put the men to work. They commenced the shed, which was built in a short time, and the little cabins for the men were built in the vicinity. In the early part of April, Laclede arrived among us. He occupied himself with his settlement, fixed the place where he wished to build his house, laid a plan of the village which he wished to found (and he named it Saint Louis, in honor of Louis XV, whose subject he expected to remain, for a long time;—he never imagined he was a subject of the King of Spain); and ordered me to follow the plan exactly, because he could not remain any longer with us. He was obliged to proceed to Fort de Chartres, to remove the goods that he had in the fort, before the arrival of the English, who were expected every day to take possession of it. I followed, to the best of my ability, his plan, and used the utmost diligence to accelerate the building of the house.

Whilst we were all very much occupied with this work, there arrived among us, in the month of [*blank in ms.*] all the tribe of the Missouris—men, women and children; and although they did not appear to have any evil intentions towards us, they were not the less a heavy charge on us, from their continual demands for provisions, and from their thefts of our tools—telling us, always, that they wished to form a village around the house we intended building, of which it would be the centre. All this talk disturbed me very much, and made me resolve to send for Monsieur de Laclede—and what still more strongly determined me to do so, was, that there had come from Caos some people to settle in the new village, but who left it again for fear of the Missouris, who numbered about one hundred and fifty warriors, while we were only thirty or thirty-five. But I should say that this tribe never

appeared to have any hostile intentions whatever. Monsieur de Laclede arrived, and immediately the Chief of the Missouris came to see him, in order to hold a council. The result of the council was that they were worthy of pity; that they were like the ducks and the geese, who sought open water in order to rest, and procure an easy subsistence; that they did not find any place more suitable, in their opinion, than the place where they were. Upon that, they said many things, which amounted always to this, that they desired to settle where they were. The council ended, Monsieur de Laclede postponed, until the following day, his reply to them. The council again assembled, and, after much vague preliminary talk, Monsieur de Laclede spoke to them with his usual firmness: "You told me, yesterday, that you were like the ducks and the geese, who traveled until they found a fine country, where there was beautiful, open water, that they might rest there, and obtain an easy living; and that you, the Missouris, who were worthy of pity, resembled them, because you traveled like them to find a place to settle yourselves, and that you did not find any one more suitable than that where you are at present; that you wished to form a village around my house, where we should live together in the greatest friendship. I reply to you in a few words, and I will say, that if you followed the example of the ducks and the geese in settling yourselves, you followed bad guides, who have no foresight; because if they had any, they would not put themselves into open water, so that the eagles and birds of prey could discover them easily, which would never happen to them if they were in a woody place, and covered with brush. You Missouris, you will not be eaten by eagles; but these men who have waged war against you for a long time past, who are in great numbers against you, who are few, will kill your warriors, because they will offer resistance, and will make your women and children slaves. Behold what will happen to you, for wishing to follow, as you say, the course of the ducks and geese, rather than the advice of men of ex-

perience. You women, who are here present, and who listen to me, go, tenderly caress your children—give them food in plenty; also, to your aged parents—press them closely in your arms—lavish upon them all the evidences of the tenderest affection, until the fatal moment which shall separate you from them—and that moment is not far distant, if your men persist in their intention to settle here. I warn you, as a good Father, that there are six or seven hundred warriors at Fort de Chartres, who are there to make war against the English—which occupies them fully at this moment, for they turn their attention below Fort Chartres, from whence they expect the English—but if they learn you are here, beyond the least doubt, they will come to destroy you. See now, warriors, if it be not prudent on your part to leave here at once, rather than to remain to be massacred, your wives and children torn to pieces, and their limbs thrown to dogs and to birds of prey. Recollect, I speak to you as a good Father; reflect well upon what I have just told you, and give me your answer this evening. I cannot give you any longer time, for I must return to Fort de Chartres.”

In the evening, the whole nation, men, women and children, came to Monsieur de Laclede, and told him that they had opened their ears wide to his discourse, and that they would follow, in all things, his advice: and they prayed him to have pity upon the women and children, and give them provisions, and a little powder and some balls for the men, that they might hunt while going up the Missouri, and defend themselves, if they were attacked. Monsieur de Laclede told them that he would have pity on them, and detained them till the next day. He could not give them anything that day, for he had not enough corn, which he was obliged to send to Caos for. As soon as he had received it, he gave them a large quantity—some powder, balls and knives, and some cloth; and the day after, all the Missouris went away, to go up the Missouri and return to their ancient village—having remained here fifteen

days, in the course of which I had the cellar of the house, which we were to build, dug by the women and children. I gave them, in payment, vermilion, awls and verdigris. They dug the largest part of it, and carried the earth in wooden platters and baskets, which they bore upon their heads.

Monsieur de Laclede, after giving the orders which he thought necessary, for the works of a settlement, left, a few days after the savages, for Fort de Chartres. Those persons who had fled to Caos on the coming of the savages, returned as soon as they knew that they had gone away, and commenced building their houses, or, to speak more correctly, their cabins, and entered their lands, agreeable to the lines of the lots which I had drawn, following the plan which Monsieur de Laclede had left with me.

Monsieur de Neyon de Villiers, who governed Upper Louisiana, under the name of Illinois, had orders from the Governor-General of the province, to evacuate the whole left bank of the Mississippi, which had been ceded to the English by the treaty of Versailles. In consequence of these orders, he caused to be withdrawn the garrisons of Fort des Pees, upon the Illinois River, that of Fort Marsiaque, on the Belle Riviere; the post of Vincennes, upon the Wabash, where commanded Monsieur de St. Ange de Bellerive; and, although the Fort des Canes was in Missouri, he brought down the little garrison of this post—and even an officer whom he had sent to build a fort on the Osage River, near a village of the tribe of the same name. As soon as he had collected all the troops at Fort de Chartres, he ordered Monsieur de St. Ange to remain there with forty men, one captain and two lieutenants, to deliver up the fort to the English, who were expected every day, and he himself prepared to go down the river on the 10th of July, 1764, with the remainder of his troops, and all the employees of the government, and a large part of the inhabitants of the villages of Fort de Chartres and Prairie du Rocher, for whom he promised to obtain free grants of land, near New Orleans,

for the sacrifices they were making of their property, in order to go and settle in Lower Louisiana, under the French government, rather than to remain under the dominion of the English, who were heretics, &c. But the real motive of Monsieur de Neyon was, to take with him a numerous train, and to descend the Mississippi in triumph, to make the government believe that all these people followed him for the great esteem which they had for his person; thereby to gain the confidence of the authorities, in order to obtain a place that he had in view. But when he learned, on arriving at New Orleans, that the country was ceded to Spain, he determined to return to Europe. He forgot all the promises that he had made to these poor, credulous people, who remained upon the strand without knowing where to lay their heads, and the government troubled themselves but little about them, because they knew that the colony would soon change masters. So that these unfortunate people, who had abandoned the little property which they possessed in Illinois, to go and live under the French government, found themselves completely disappointed in their hopes. Some of them, in order to live, went with their families to Opelousas, others to Atakapas, where, however, they could not carry, on account of the want of facilities for transportation, the materials which they had brought down with them; and they were obliged to give them for almost nothing, in order to procure a little maize and rice. Those who, having some means, returned to Illinois, were very happy to find there Monsieur de Laclede, who aided them in a great many ways, and observed to them, that if they had been willing to follow his advice, as others had done, who had not wished to follow their evil destiny, they would not now be in the unpleasant situation in which they found themselves.

Monsieur de Laclede, penetrating the motives which actuated Monsieur de Neyon, did all in his power to hinder them from going down, which he did without any interested view, but through humanity, telling them that the English government

was not so terrible as they wished to make them believe; that, for his part, he had a much more favorable opinion of it. However, if, in consequence of false prejudice, they did not wish to remain under this government, he would recommend them to go up to his new settlement, and he would facilitate for them the means of getting there with their effects; and, as for their animals, it was very easy to conduct them by land, since the journey was only nineteen leagues by a good road. Several families¹ accepted these offers, and obtained immediately the wagons and the necessary harness to proceed to St. Louis, and there he aided them in settling and ordered me to assign them lands, according to the plan that he had made, which I did as exactly as possible. As I have already observed, that immediately upon the departure of the tribe of the Missouris, the inhabitants who had fled to Caos had returned, and, with those of Fort de Chartres, commenced to give some permanence to St. Louis.

After the departure of Monsieur de Neyon, which took place the 10th of July, 1764, and the emigration of its inhabitants to St. Louis, the village of Fort de Chartres remained totally deserted, except the garrison of the fort, and some government employees, who also lived in the fort, because in the village, a part of the houses had been demolished by the owners, who took the boards, the windows and door frames, and everything else they could transport, to the places where they intended to settle.

In the course of the winter 1764-5, the savages of the north

1. joseph Tayon	Beaugenoux	Antoine Pothier
Roger Tayon	Cotté	J ^{re} Labrosse
Dechene	Pichet	" Labrosse
Beauchamps	hervieux	Louis Chancellier
Marcereau	Bacané	Chancellier
joseph Bequet	Francois Delin	gamache
P ^{re} Bequet	La grossé	Ride
Gabriel Dodier	Kierseraux	Roy
B ^{re} Martigné	gregoire Kierceraux	Lajoie mercer
Lemoine Martigné	Alexis Picard	La grain

of this country knew that the English were fitting out an expedition at New Orleans, to take possession of the Illinois country. These savages, desiring to oppose this, set out for Fort de Chartres, to the number of four hundred men, having at their head the famous Pontiac, of the Ottawa nation, who had absolute authority over these tribes, because he had commanded them in the capture of many forts occupied by the English, against whom he waged a cruel war, since the peace of 1762. He said that he fought to avenge the French; but, in truth, it was through a disposition for robbery and plunder.

Upon his arrival near Fort de Chartres, he encamped his people at a short distance, and obliged the Peorias and Metchiquamici (who had their village a league from the fort), to take up arms with them, if the case should require it. The Illinois not appearing very well disposed to do so, he said to them: "If you hesitate one moment, I will destroy you, like the fire which passes through a prairie; open wide your ears, and remember it is Pontiac who speaks." From this moment, the Illinois appeared to make part of the coalition—I believe, because they could not do otherwise. After various arrangements, Pontiac went to see Monsieur de St. Ange, and took with him the braves of his party. On seeing him, he said: "My father, for a long time I and my warriors have determined to give you our hand, and to smoke together our pipe of peace—recalling to each other all the campaigns that we have made together against the savages, and those dogs of English."

M. de St. Ange de Bellerive was a Canadian, and an old officer, who had served from his tenderest youth against the savages, whereby he had gained much reputation, especially after the defeat of the army at Chiquachas, where he was present under the command of M. Prudomme.² M. Prudomme

2. Chouteau here confuses Robert Groston de St. Ange (who died at the village of Fort de Chartres before 1743) with his son Louis Groston de St. Ange de Bellerive (born Canada 20 February 1702, died St. Louis 1774). It was Robert who commanded at Fort Chartres at the time

was a brave officer, who had fought in Europe, and wished to follow the same tactics in fighting the savages. M. de Bellerive having made some observation to him, upon the manner of conducting this war, these representations appeared to offend M. Prudomme, and he determined to follow his European principles in the attack of the fort of the Chiquachas, which was in a large prairie, surrounded by strong stakes and well embanked, and in which there were about eight hundred warriors, well armed, and generally good shots with the rifle. They were well informed of this fact, by some French prisoners whom the Chiquachas had taken, and who had escaped. In spite of this knowledge of the situation of this fort, M. Prudomme wished to take it by assault; and, in consequence, placed his troops, and ordered the attack. M. Bellerive said to him, at that time, that, considering the situation of the fort, he looked upon the taking it by main force as impossible; that it would be better to await the arrival of the artillery, which was in the reserve camp on the Mississippi; and that, while awaiting its arrival, they could invest the fort, and, by this means, be assured of complete success; that, otherwise, they ran the risk of a disastrous defeat. The Canadian officers, who had come from Canada with M. Bellerive, and had joined M. Prudomme with a detachment of whites and savages, approved the plan of M. Bellerive, while the officers from France, who had come up from New Orleans with M. Prudomme, were of his opinion. After many words on one side and the other, M. Prudomme addressed M. de Bellerive, and said to him, with a proud and haughty air: "Monsieur, when we are afraid of the wolf, we don't go in the woods." M. Bellerive said to him: "This is not the time to answer you. I will only say, that I have no fear of bullets,

of the Sac and Fox War in 1730 and his eldest son Pierre (born Canada 17 November 1693) who died in the Chickasaw War in 1736. Louis apparently spent the years 1724-1736 on the Missouri; in the latter years he was transferred to Vincennes where he commanded until 1764.—
EDITOR.

but rather of being thought ignorant of the method of attacking a fort; and of losing the two thousand men who are under our command, without the hope of saving even a feeble remnant.—The contrary would happen if we waited for our artillery. You are determined to attack and take the fort without artillery. Very well!—Let us march!!” When the Indian chiefs, who were present at the departure of the two leaders, saw M. Bellerive marching upon the fort, they ran to him, took him by the hand, and said: “Bellerive, stop; where are you going? Do you not see that it is impossible to take the fort without cannon, and that if you persist in trying to take it you will be killed, and, afterwards, your army will be totally massacred? Believe us, give up this assault, recall your men that you led from Canada, and let alone this mad chief, who will be killed, with all who follow him. You say that he is a brave, and that you must follow him; that if you do not do so, you would be branded as a coward. No, Bellerive, you will never pass for such. Who is it that does not know you, all the campaigns that you have made, and in which you have been always successful? Who does not recollect, that it was you who reduced the Sac and Fox Nations? All these campaigns have gained you the esteem of the whites and the red men; they will always regard you as a brave; so believe us. Remain, and dispose of all those who came with you from Canada, in such a way as to save those who will not be killed in the attack upon the fort.” M. Bellerive gave them his hand, and said, “I hope, my brothers, that you will act in the affair which is about to take place, like true braves, as you have always done. See, the chief is advancing; I must follow him; farewell.” He rejoined M. Prudomme, and said to him, “Now is the moment that will decide which of us was wrong; assuredly, it will be neither you nor I who will be able to decide the question, but those who will survive us. Recollect, if you have any orders to give, if I am not before you I shall be beside you.” They advanced upon the fort with firmness, and all the little army did the

same, following the example of their chiefs, who had given the order to cut down the stakes, with axes; but when they were within half gun-shot distance, they received a discharge from the besieged, which killed the two chiefs, many officers, and a great number of soldiers. At the second discharge, they again killed a great many; and, at the third discharge, which was the most murderous, the besiegers retired in disorder, without having wounded a single man.—How could they have done so, since they fought against strong stakes and earth works? The besieged, perceiving the rout of the besiegers, made a sortie, and massacred all whom they could overtake, pursuing them with a fierceness which is only known to barbarians. Happily, night came, and enabled several to escape, and regain the reserve camp. At day-break, the savages followed upon the path of the fugitives; they had dogs that discovered the wounded in the thickets, and, as soon as found, they were cut in pieces. All this day was passed in seeking them, and those who had strayed from the road. There perished, in the attack on the fort and in the rout, nine hundred men. The savages who were not engaged, and who gained the reserve camp, were there told, that there was no doubt that the army would be defeated. Upon this intelligence, the officer in command doubled his guards, and sent a detachment forward on the road to reconnoitre. They met several officers and soldiers, of whom the greatest part were wounded, who confirmed the news of the destruction of the army, cursing, in the most expressive terms, the conduct of M. Prudomme, and his obstinacy in not being willing to follow the wise counsel of M. Bellerive, who allowed himself to be killed for a point of honor—very untimely held under such circumstances. The commander of the camp sent, during four days, strong detachments to meet those who had escaped from the massacre. At the end of this time, not seeing any one, and afraid of being attacked himself, he caused to be embarked all the artillery and the other articles that were there. The regular troops descended to New Orleans,

with the material of the army; the militia and savages took the road towards Canada, from whence they had come, and nothing remained in this camp, which retains, to this day, the name of l'Ecore à Prudomme.

I take up again my Journal, which I had stopped until this time, in order to show the reason why the savages had so much respect for M. de St. Ange de Bellerive, brother of the one who was killed at Chicquachas, and who had himself often engaged in warfare, in company with these savages, in which he had gained their confidence by his bravery.

*Notes on
St. Louis*

by

John A. Paxton

On 31 March 1821 the St. Louis Enquirer announced that John A. Paxton, "formerly editor of the Philadelphia Directory and Register, contemplates publishing a similar work for St. Louis, which will contain the names, professions and residence, of the heads of families and persons in business; the constitution of the State of Missouri and officers of government; a description of St. Louis and its vicinity; the officers of the various public institutions and societies; together with a variety of other useful information. . . ." Paxton must have set briskly to work, for the Missouri Gazette on 30 May advertised The St. Louis Directory and Register, containing the Names, Professions, and Residence of all the Heads of Families and Persons in Business; together with Descriptive Notes on St. Louis as just published and on sale at \$1. The entire Directory was reprinted in the St. Louis Directory for 1854-5 (St. Louis, Chambers and Knapp, 1854); some typographical errors are to be found in the latter edition. "Notes on St. Louis," an unpagged preface, dated 26 May 1821, is here reproduced from a copy of the very rare original publication in the Missouri Historical Society.

Notes on St. Louis

St. Louis, Missouri, is a flourishing incorporated post town, pleasantly situated on the right bank of the Mississippi river, 18 miles below the junction of the Missouri; 190 above the mouth of the Ohio; and about 1200 above New-Orleans. It is the seat of justice for St. Louis county, and is in a township of the same name. In latitude $38^{\circ} 39'$ N. and long. $12^{\circ} 51'$ W. from Washington City. It is the largest town in the state, of which it is the commercial metropolis. The site is elevated and has a decided advantage over any of the other towns, on account of its being a bold shore of limestone rocks, which repels the floods:—Such situations are very rare, as the Mississippi is almost universally bounded either by high perpendicular rocks or loose alluvial soil, the later of which is in continual danger of being washed away by the annual floods. This spot has an abrupt acclivity from the river to the first bottom; and a gradual one from it, to the second; the first bank has a view of the river and the numerous boats ranged along the shore and moving on its water, and is elevated about 40 feet; the second bank is 40 feet higher than the first bottom, and affords a fine view of the town, river, and surrounding country. *St. Louis*, extends nearly 2 miles along the river, and the country around, and west of it for the distance of 15 miles, is an extended prairie of a very luxuriant soil, beautifully undulating, and covered with shrubby oak, and a variety of other small growth.

St. Louis, was first settled by Mr. Peter de Laclede Liguist, who had obtained, at New Orleans, from the French authority, the exclusive privilege of the Indian trade on the Missouri

river. When he first came to the Illinois country,¹ there was on the west bank of the Mississippi river, only the weak and small settlement of Saint Genevieve; its distance from the Missouri was by no means suitable to his views, and he was determined to find a more convenient situation;—he, therefore, visited all parts of the country and found that the spot on which the town now stands, was best calculated for his contemplated purposes, as much by the richness of the soil as by the short distance by land to the Missouri, Meramec and other neighboring streams, but principally for the beauty of its elevation, which undoubtedly, is without parallel in upper Louisiana. Mr. de Laclede, considering these advantages, settled himself, and had the first trees felled on the 15th February, 1764. He frequently told his friends, that he was commencing the foundation of a town which might prove with time to be one of the greatest in America. Shortly after the beginning of this settlement, several inhabitants from Cahokia and fort Chartres came and settled themselves. Mr. de Laclede encouraged and protected them against the Indians, over whom he had great ascendancy. These new settlers, Indians and Missouri travelers, (boatmen,) gave to this new settlement, the name of “Laclede’s village,” though the latter never would consent to it, and caused it to be in all the official documents, named “St. Louis,” which at length prevailed. He made choice of this name in honor of Louis XV then king of France.

Since that period the progress of civilization and improvement is wonderful—It is but about 40 years since the now flourishing, but yet more promising state of Missouri, was but a vast wilderness, many of the inhabitants of this country, yet remembering the time when they met together to kill the Buffalo at the same place where Mr. Philipson’s Ox saw and flour mill is now erected, and on Mill Creek, near to where

1. At this early period, the country on both sides of the Mississippi, was generally known as Illinois, and was first settled from Canada, by way of the lakes, and the Illinois and other rivers.

Mr. Chouteau's mill now stands—What a prodigious change has been operated! St. Louis is now ornamented with a great number of brick buildings, and both the scholar and courtier could move in a circle suiting their choice and taste.—

By the exertions of the Right Reverend Bishop Louis William Du Bourg, the inhabitants have seen a fine brick Cathedral rise, at the same spot where stood formerly an old log Church, then sufficient, but which now would scarcely be able to contain the tenth part of the Catholic congregation: This elegant building was commenced in 1818, under the superintendence of Mr. Gabriel Paul, the Architect, and is only in part completed: as it now stands it is 40 feet front by 135 in depth and 40 feet in height. When completed it will have a wing on each side, running its whole length, 22½ feet wide and 25 in height; giving it a front of 85 feet. It will have a steeple the same height as the depth of the building which will be provided with several large bells expected from France. The lot on which the Church, College, and other buildings are erected, embraces a complete square, a part of which is used as a burial ground. The Cathedral of Saint Louis, can boast of having no rival in the United States for the magnificence, the value and elegance of her sacred vases, ornaments and paintings; and indeed few Churches in Europe possess anything superior to it. It is a truly delightful sight to an American of taste, to find in one of the remotest towns of the Union a Church decorated with the *original* paintings of Rubens, Raphael, Guido, Paul, Veronze [*sic*], and a number of others by the first modern masters of the Italian, French and Flemish schools.—The ancient and precious gold embroideries which the St. Louis Cathedral possesses, would certainly decorate any museum in the world. All this is due to the liberality of the Catholics of Europe, who presented these rich articles to Bishop Du Bourg, on his last turn through France, Italy, Sicily, and the Netherlands. Among the liberal benefactors could be named many princes and prin-

cesses; but we will only insert the names of Louis XVIII the present King of France and that of the baroness Le Candéle de Ghyseghem, a Flemish lady to whose munificence the Cathedral is particularly indebted; and who even lately, has sent it a fine, large and elegant Organ, fit to correspond with the rest of the decorations. The Bishop possesses, besides, a very elegant and valuable Library, containing about 8000 volumes, and which is without doubt, the most complete, scientific and literary repertory of the western country, if not of the western world. Though it is not public, there is no doubt but the man of science, the antiquary, and the linguist, will obtain a ready access to it, and the Bishop a man endowed at once with the elegance and politeness of the courtier, the piety and zeal of the Apostle, and the learning of a Father of the Church. Connected with this establishment is the Saint Louis College, under the direction of Bishop Du Bourg.—It is a two story brick building, and has about 65 students, who are taught the Greek, Latin, French, English, Spanish, and Italian languages, Mathematics elementary and transcendent, drawing, &c.—There are several teachers. Connected with the College is an Ecclesiastical Seminary, at the Barrens in St. Genevieve county, where Divinity, the Oriental languages, and Philosophy, are taught.

St. Louis likewise contains 10 common schools; a brick Baptist Church, 40 feet by 60, built in 1818; an Episcopal Church of wood; the Methodist congregation hold their meetings in the old court house; and the Presbyterians in the circuit court room.—In St. Louis are the following Mercantile, Professional, Mechanical, &c establishments, viz; 46 Mercantile establishments, which carry on an extensive trade, with the most distant parts of the Republic, in merchandize, produce, furs and peltry; 3 Auctioneers, who do considerable business: each pays \$200 per annum to the state, for a licence to sell, and on all personal property sold, is a state duty of 3 per cent, on real estate $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent, and their commission of 5 per cent;

3 weekly newspapers, viz: "St. Louis Inquirer," "Missouri Gazette," & "St. Louis Register," and as many Printing Offices; 1 Book-store, 2 Binderies; 3 large Inns, together with a number of smaller Taverns & boarding houses; 5 Livery Stables; 57 Grocers and Bottlers; 27 Attorneys and Counsellors at Law; 13 Physicians; 3 Druggists and Apothecaries; 3 Midwives; 1 Portrait Painter, who would do credit to any country; 5 Clock and Watch makers, Silversmiths and Jewellers; 1 Silver Plater; 1 Engraver; 1 Brewery, where is manufactured Beer, Ale, and Porter, of a quality equal to any in the western country; 1 Tannery; 3 Soap and Candle Factories; 2 Brick Yards; 3 Stone Cutters; 14 Bricklayers and Plasterers; 28 Carpenters; 9 Blacksmiths, 3 Gun smiths; 2 Copper and Tin Ware manufacturers; 6 Cabinet makers; 4 Coach makers and Wheelwrights; 7 Turners and Chair makers; 3 Saddle and Harness manufacturers; 3 Hatters; 12 Tailors; 13 Boot and Shoe manufacturers; 10 Ornamental Sign and House Painters and Glaziers; 1 Nail Factory; 4 Hair dressers and perfumers; 2 Confectioners and Cordial distillers; 4 Coopers, Block, Pump and Mast makers; 4 bakers; 1 Comb Factory; 1 Bell-man; 5 Billiard-Tables, which pay an annual tax of \$100 each, to the state, and the same sum to the corporation; several Hacks or pleasure Carriages, and a considerable number of Drays and Carts, several professional Musicians, who play at the Balls, which are very frequent and well attended by the inhabitants, more particularly the French, who, in general, are remarkably graceful performers, and much attached to so rational, healthy and improving an amusement; 2 Potteries are within a few miles, and there are several promising gardens in and near to the town.

By an enumeration taken by the Editor of this work, in May, 1821, it appears that the town contains the following number of dwelling houses, viz:—154 of Brick and Stone, and 196 of Wood, in the North part of the town, and 78 of Brick and Stone, and 223 of Wood, in the South part; making 232 of

Brick, &c. and 419, of Wood, and a total of 651. There are besides the dwelling houses, a number of Brick, Stone, and wooden Warehouses, Stables, Shops and out houses—Most of the houses are furnished with a garden, some of which are large and under good cultivation. The large old fashioned dwellings, erected by the French inhabitants, are surrounded by a piazza, which renders them very pleasant, particularly during the heat of summer. The “Steam-Boat-warehouse,” built by Mr. Josiah Bright, is a large brick building, and would do credit to any of the Eastern cities. The Market-house is well supplied with fish and fowl, good meat and vegetables, fruit in its season, and in short every thing that the country affords, in abundance, at reasonable prices.

St. Louis was incorporated by the Court of Common Pleas, at their November term, 1809, when the country was known as the Territory of Louisiana; under the following limits, viz:—“Beginning at Roy’s mill on the bank of the Mississippi river, thence running 60 arpens west, thence south on said line of sixty arpens in the rear, until the same comes to the Barriere denoyer, thence due south until it comes to the Sugar Loaf, thence due east to the Mississippi, from thence by the Mississippi along low water mark, to the place first mentioned.”—The bounds of the town, as it respects the taxing of the inhabitants, is confined to the following bounds viz: commencing at the mouth of mill creek, (where it enters the Mississippi river,) thence with the said creek to the mill-dam, thence with the north arm of mill creek to the head of the same, thence by a line running parallel with the Mississippi river, until it intersects the north boundary of the corporation.

The town is governed by five Trustees, who are elected on the 6th December annually, by the inhabitants.—There is also a register, whose duty it is to see that the Ordinances are enforced; an Assessor and an Inspector of lumber.

The Board of Trustees has passed a number of very wholesome Ordinances for the establishment and support of order,

all of which can be seen in the Ordinance book, in the office of the Corporation, South B. street above Main street, which is open every morning, Sundays excepted, from 10 to 12 o'clock.

The assessed amount of taxable Property in the Corporation of St. Louis, for 1821, is about \$940,926, which gives about \$3763 tax.

Eight streets run parallel with the river, and are intersected by twenty-three others at right angles; three of the preceding, are in the *lower* part of the town, and the five others in the *upper* part. The streets in the lower part of the town are narrow, being 32 to 38½ feet in width; those streets on "the Hill," or upper part, are much wider. "The Hill," is much the most pleasant and salubrious, and will no doubt, become the most improved. The lower end of Market street is well paved, and the Trustees of the town have passed an Ordinance for paving the side Walks of Main street, being the second from and parallel to the river, and the principal one for business. This is a very wholesome regulation of the Trustees, and is the more necessary as this and many other streets are sometimes so extremely muddy as to be rendered almost impassable. It is hoped that the Trustees will next pave the middle of Main street, and that they will proceed gradually, to improve the other streets; which will contribute to make the town more healthy, add to the value of property, and make it a desirable place of residence. On the Hill, in the centre of the town is a public square 240 by 300 feet, on which it is intended to build an elegant Court-House:—The various courts, are held at present, in buildings adjacent to the Public Square. A new stone jail of two stories, 70 feet front, by 30 deep, stands west of the site for the Court-House.

Market street, is the middle of the town, and is the line dividing the North part from the South: Those streets running north from Market street, having the addition of *North* to their names, and those running in the opposite direction, *South*, for example, North-Main street, South Main street, North A. &c.

street, South A. street. The houses were first numbered by the publisher of this Directory, in May, 1821.

The fortifications, erected in early times, for the defence of the place, stand principally on "the Hill." They consist of several circular stone towers, about 15 feet in height, and 20 in diameter, a wooden block house, and a large stone Bastian, the interior of which is used as a garden, by Captain A. Wetmore, of the United States army.

Just above the town are several Indian mounds & remains of antiquity, which afford an extensive and most charming view of the towns and beautiful surrounding country, situated in the two states of Missouri and Illinois, which are separated by the majestic Mississippi, and which is likewise observed in the scene as she glides along in all her greatness. Adjacent to the large mound nearest to the town, is the MOUND GARDEN, belonging to Col. Elias Rector, and kept by Mr. James Gray, as a place of entertainment and recreation; the proprietor has displayed considerable taste in laying it out in beds and walks and ornamenting it with flowers and shrubbery—In short it affords a delightful and pleasant retreat from the noise, heat and dust of a busy town.

There is a Masonic Hall in which the Grand Lodge of the state of Missouri, the Royal Arch, and the Master mason's Lodges are held. Connected with this excellent institution is a burying ground, where poor Masons are interred at the expense of the Fraternity. The Council Chamber of Gov. William Clark, where he gives audience to the Chiefs of the various tribes of Indians who visit St. Louis, contains probably the most complete Museum of Indian curiosities to be met with any where in the United States; and the governor is so polite as to permit its being visited by any person of respectability at any time.

There are two fire engines, with properly organized companies; one of which is in the North part of town, and the other in the South. Every dwelling and store has to be provided with good leather fire buckets.

Mr. Samuel Wiggins is the proprietor of two elegant and substantial Team-Ferry Boats, that ply regularly and alternately, from the bottom of North H. street near the Steam boat Warehouse, to the opposite shore. The great public utility of this mode of conveying persons and property across the Mississippi needs no comment, but gives the enterprising owner of them, a high claim to the patronage of his fellow-citizens. The River at the ferry is 1 and an 8th mile in width. Opposite the upper part of the town and above the ferry, is an island about one mile and a half in length, containing upwards of 1000 acres; it belongs to Mr. Samuel Wiggins. A considerable sand bar has been formed in the river, adjoining the lower part of the town, which extends far out, and has thrown the main channel over on the Illinois side; when the water is low it is entirely dry, and is covered with an immense quantity of *drift wood*, nearly sufficient to supply the town with fuel and only costs the trouble of cutting and hauling; this is of great consequence to the inhabitants of St. Louis, particularly as the growth of wood is small in the immediate neighbourhood, on this side of the river. Wood is likewise brought down the river in large quantities for disposal.

Population in 1810, 1,000; in 1818, 3,500; and at this time, (1821), about 5,500.—The town and country contains 9,732. The population is much mixed, consisting principally of Americans, from every part of the Union; the original and other French, of whom there are 155 families, and foreigners of various nations; consequently the Society is much diversified, and has no *general* fixed character.—This, the reader will perceive, arises from the situation of the country in itself new, flourishing, & changing: still that class who compose the respectable part of the community, are hospitable, polite, and well informed. And here, I must take occasion, in justice to the town and country, to protest against the many calumnies circulated abroad to the prejudice of St. Louis, respecting the manners, and dispositions of the inhabitants. Persons meet

here with dissimilar habits, of a different education, and possessing various localities. It is not therefore surprising, that, in a place, composed of such discordant materials, there should be occasional differences and difficulties. — But the reader may be assured that old-established inhabitants have little participation in transactions which have so far so much injured the town.

St. Louis has grown very rapidly; there is not, however, so much improvement going on at this time, owing to the check caused by the general and universal pressure that pervades the country.—This state of things can only be temporary here, for it possesses such permanent advantages from its local & geographical situation, that it must, ere some distant day, become a place of great importance; being more central with regard to the whole territory belonging to the United States, than any other considerable town; and uniting the advantages of the three great rivers, Mississippi, Missouri, and Illinois, the trade of which it is the emporium.

“The Missouri Fur Company” was formed by several gentlemen of St. Louis, in 1819, for the purpose of trading on the Missouri river and its waters. The principal establishment of the Company is at Council Bluffs, yet they have several others of minor consequence several hundred miles above,—and it is expected that the establishment will be extended shortly up as high as the Mandan villages. The actual capital invested in the trade is supposed to amount at this time, to about \$70,000. They have in their employ exclusive of their partners on the river, 25 clerks and interpreters, and 70 laboring men.

It is estimated that the annual value of the Indian trade of the Missouri and Mississippi rivers, is \$600,000. The annual amount of imports of this town is stated at upwards of \$2,000,000.—The commerce by water is carried on by a great number of Steam Boats, Barges and Keel Boats.—These centre here after performing the greatest inland voyages, known in the world. The principal articles of trade are fur, peltry, and

lead. The agricultural productions are Indian corn, wheat, rye, barley, oats, buckwheat, tobacco, and other articles common to the western country.—Excellent mill stones are found, and made in this country; stone coal is abundant, and salt petre, & common salt have been made within a few miles. Within 3 or 4 miles are several springs of good water, and 7 miles SW. is a *Sulphur Spring*. In the vicinity are 2 natural caverns, in lime-stone rocks; 2 miles above town at “North St. Louis,” is a Steam-saw mill; and several common mills are on the neighbouring streams. The roads leading from St. Louis are very good, and it is expected that the Great National Turnpike, leading from Washington, will strike this place, as the Commissioners for the United States have reported in favor of it.

The American bottom is a very beautiful, rich and extensive tract on the east side of the Mississippi extending from the Kaskaskia to within five miles of the Missouri, being about 90 miles in length by from 2 to 8 in width; opposite to St. Louis it is 7 miles. The St. Louis market is principally supplied from the state of Illinois.

The Indian agents and traders, the officers of the army destined for upper military posts, and the surveyors make their outfits at St. Louis, which puts a great deal of cash into circulation. Here is a land office for the sale of the United States’ lands in Illinois, Missouri and Arkansas, a bank with a capital of \$250,000. There is a Theatre of wood, but the foundation has been laid for a brick one, 40 by 80 feet, which, owing to the present stagnation in business, will not be completed very soon. Lumber of various kinds is brought here from the Gasconade and other rivers; brick and lime are made; and stone, sand, and every other material for building, are abundant. Two stages run from this town; one to Edwardsville, and the other to Franklin. Colonel Chouteau’s mill dam in the rear of the south part of the town, is a beautiful sheet of water, affording plenty of fish and water fowl; it has outlet to the Mississippi, below the town.

It is contemplated at some future day to open a direct intercourse with India by the Missouri and Columbia rivers. In the course of a few years the Illinois river will be most probably connected with lake Michigan, which will afford incalculable advantages to this place, as it will open a direct water communication, when the New York and Pennsylvania Canals to the lakes are completed, to Montreal, New York and Philadelphia.

St. Louis is distant from St. Charles 20 miles; Franklin, 180; Carondelet, 6; St. Ferdinand, 15; Herculanum, 30; St. Genevieve, 60; Potosi, or the lead mines, 60; Kaskaskia, 65; Edwardsville, 20; Vincennes, 160; Cahokia, 5; Belleville, 18; Alton, 25; and west from the city of Washington, 982. It is by water about 650 miles to the Council Bluffs and 1,600 to the Mandan villages.

St. Louis

by

Lewis C. Beck

Lewis Caleb Beck (1798-1853), a graduate of Union College, came to St. Louis about 1818 or 1819 to practice medicine. He spent much of his time, however, in collecting plants and general information about the country on both sides of the Mississippi. On his return to Albany in 1823 he published A Gazetteer of the States of Illinois and Missouri, containing a General View of each State, a General View of their Counties, and a Particular Description of their Towns, Villages, Rivers, &c. &c. with a map and other engravings. Although Beck made no pretence of being an historian, his account is based upon actual residence in St. Louis and information collected there. As a serious detailed statement, his sketch deserves to be included among the early histories of the town. The text presented here is reproduced from pp. 323-331 of the copy of his Gazetteer in the Peck Collection of the St. Louis Mercantile Library.

a l'issue de la paix de 1762. entre la France l'Angleterre et l'Espagne le
gouvernement français envoya M^r Dabbadie avec un titre de Directeur Général et
Commandant pour S. M. L. en la Louisiane

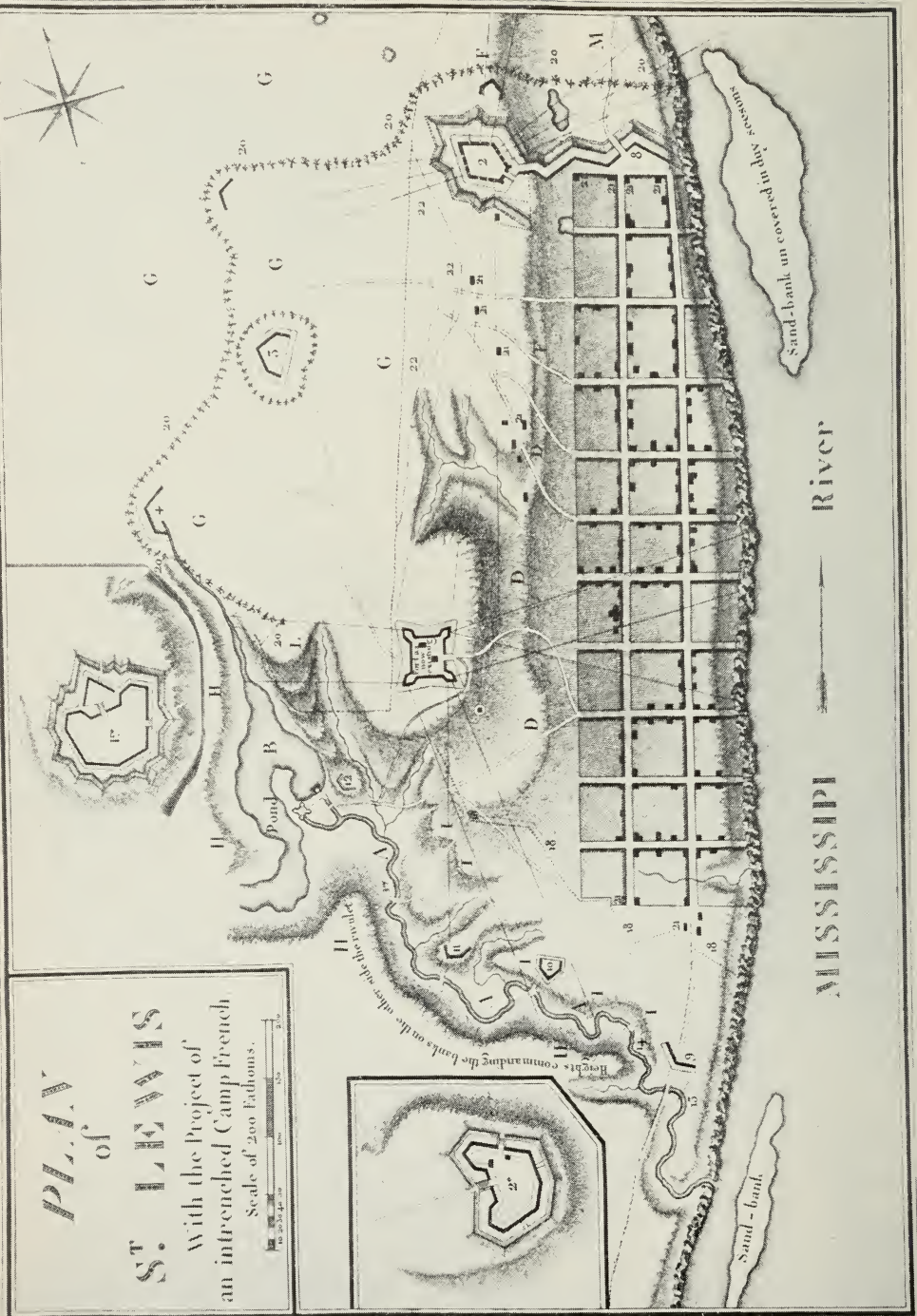


Journal

Dans le commencement de l'année 1762 - M^r Dabbadie a été - Directeur Général et
Commandant de la Louisiane accorda avec les Compagnies des traités exclusifs avec les
Savages du Missouri et toute la nation ^{habitante} de toutes les Mississipi pendant
l'Espace de 8 années - cette Compagnie se forma sous la raison de S. M. Lachet de qui
antérieurement ^{assistait les hommes et l'emission signa avec le gouvernement} Compagnie et elle fit acheter des marchandises
et les charbonniers elle prit les marchandises pour faire venir d'Europe les
les marchandises nécessaires pour l'entretien de ses Communes alimenter ses habitants
Ses Communes qu'elle se proposait d'établir autour qui posséderait ^{son établissement}
les marchandises qu'elle avait de marchandises étrangères arrivées - en conséquence elle fit un
armement considérable à la tête de quel elle mit M^r C. Lachet de qui
Connu pour un homme d'un haut mérite Capable pour les Commissions de
Conduire avec sagacité et prudence la conduite de la Compagnie et parti pour
de la N^o Orleans le 3 août 1763 - et arriva aux Indes le 3 Nov. ^{la Suivi par}
obtenus qu'il y avait quelques uns des établissements du français ^{le bon}
les Indes quelques des Mississipi qui avaient été aux anglais par le traité de 1763 et que sur
les Indes était qui restait à la France il n'y avait que les faibles villages de S. Genesio
dans la quel M^r de Lachet ne put pas trouver une maison Capable de contenir
un quart de ses marchandises - M^r de Lachet commanda des four de charbonniers instruits de
démorcer de l'habitation lui voyant un officier lui dire qu'il y avait l'impolitesse qu'il
donné qu'il put débarquer les marchandises avec les Indes ^(villages)
qui s'étaient trouvés qu'il lui offrait le Logement de ses marchandises dans son
for jus qu'à ce que les anglais ne vinrent prendre possession, la nécessité et accepta
l'offre avec les Indes l'offre générale de M^r de Lachet de S. Genesio
et se rendit le 1^{er} Nov. 1763 au fort de Chartres où il débarqua toute les marchandises
et fit de suite tout le Equipement pour la différente nation - après tout l'affaire de
Pratiqué faite il s'occupa des moyens de former un Etablissement convenable à son
Commerce S. Genesio ne convenait pas pour l'établissement occasion de son éloignement du
Missouri - et la situation peu saine. En conséquence le désireront à chercher un
site plus avantageux. En conséquence il parti du fort de Chartres dans la

*With the Project of
an entrenched Camp French*

Scale of 200 Fathoms.



Drawer 139.
Sheet 2.

(St Louis)

(139a)

Map of the
Mississippi Country

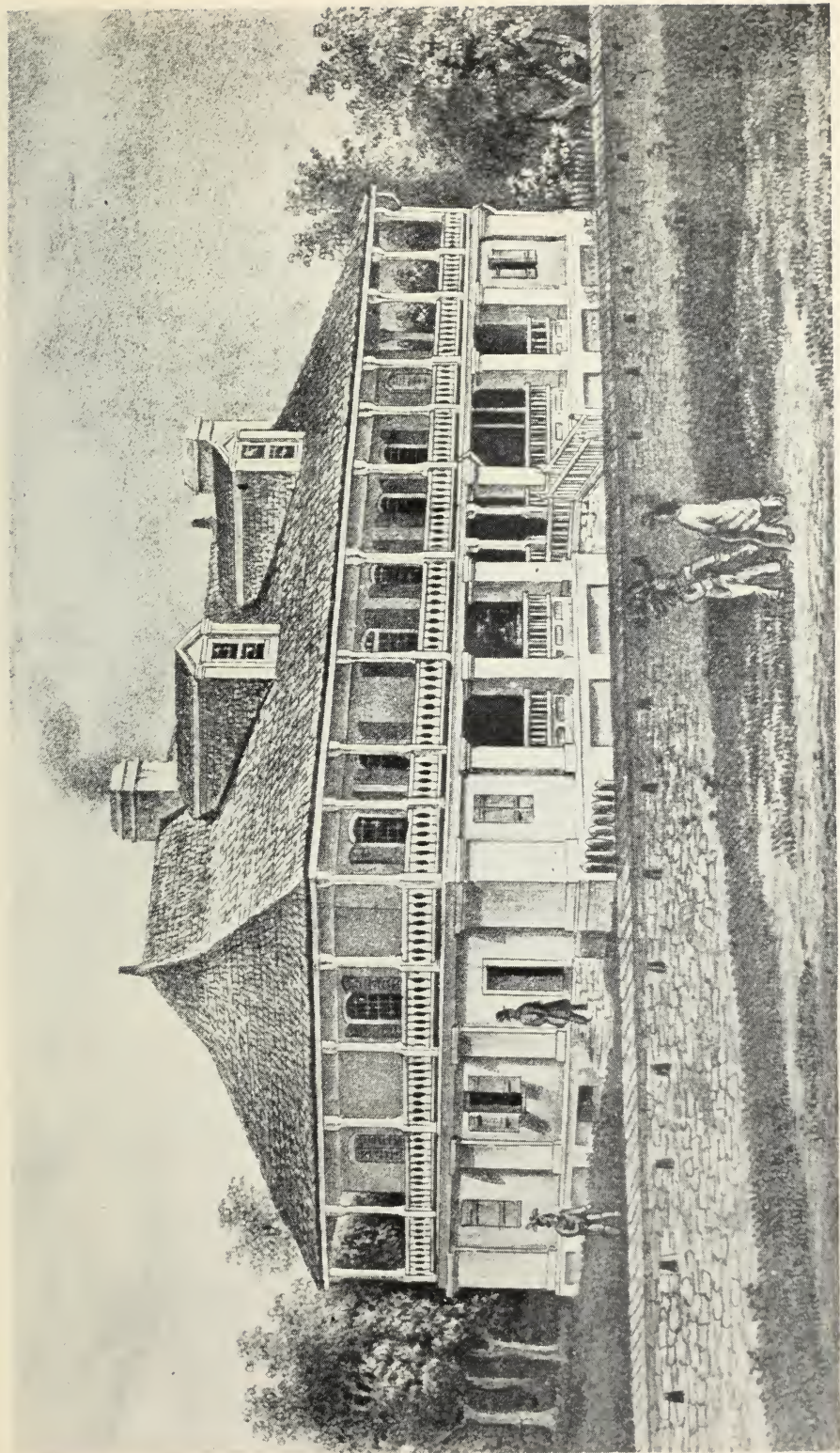


Mississippi R.

139-2



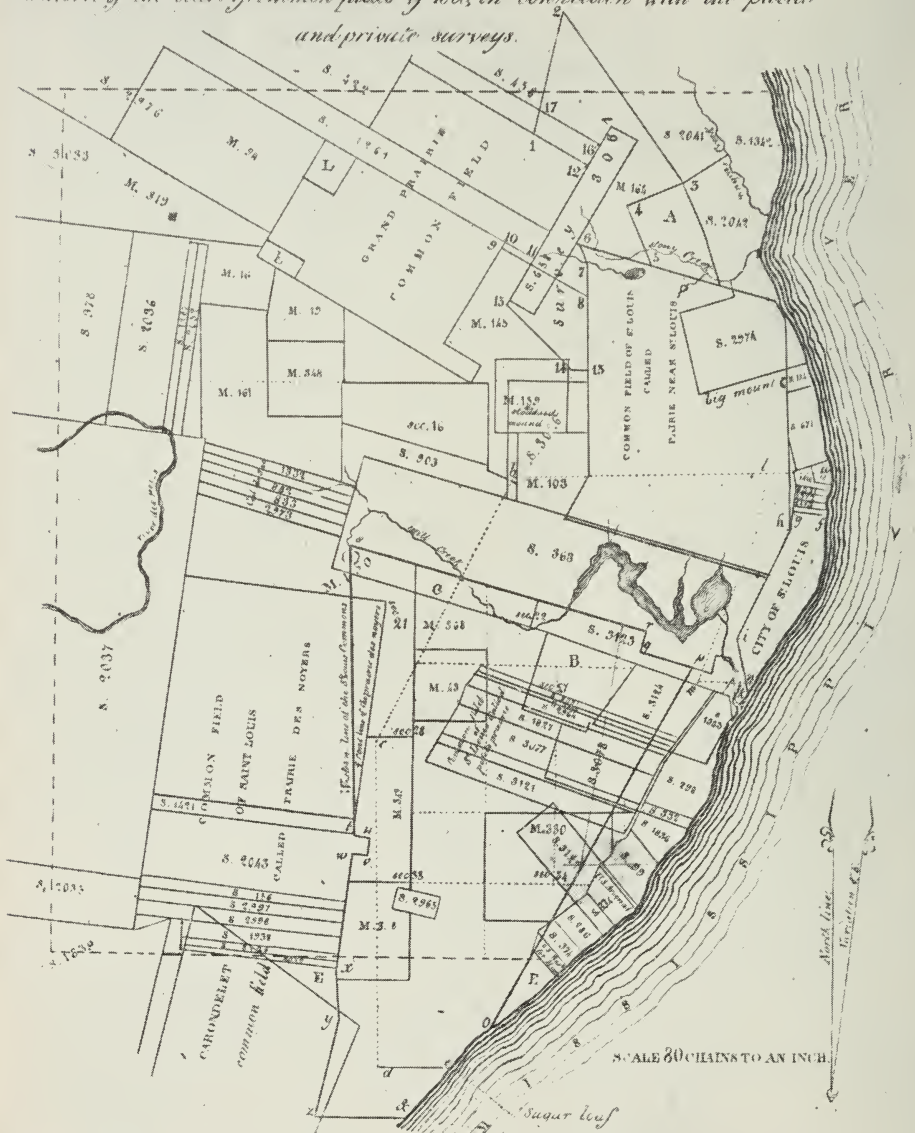
Auguste Chouteau, 1749-1829. Courtesy Missouri Historical Society



The Auguste Chouteau Mansion in 1841. From the lithograph by J. C. Wild in *The Valley of the Mississippi Illustrated*.
Courtesy The Mercantile Library of St. Louis

TOWNSHIP 45 NORTH RANGE 7 EAST.

Shewing the municipal limits of the town of St. Louis as surveyed in 1820 under a decree of the court from common pleas of 1803 in connection with the public and private surveys.



The above map is in strict accordance with the Township map in the U. S. surveyors' office.

William Miller

John B. Dupré, 1820

St. Louis

St. Louis, a flourishing post town, the seat of justice of St. Louis county, and formerly the capital of the territory and state, is situated on the west bank of the Mississippi, 18 miles below the mouth of the Missouri. It is by far the largest town in the state, and is considered its commercial metropolis. The site is elevated many feet above the inundations of the Mississippi, and is protected from them by a limestone bank which extends nearly two miles. Such situations are extremely rare, as the Mississippi is almost universally bounded either by high perpendicular rocks, or loose alluvial soil, the latter of which is in continual danger of being washed away by the annual floods.

This spot has an abrupt acclivity from the river to the first bottom, and a gradual one from it to the second. The first bank has a view of the river, being elevated about 20 feet above the highest water; the second bank is 40 feet higher than the first, and affords a fine view of the town, river, and surrounding country. This town was originally laid out on the first bank, and consisted of three narrow streets, running parallel with the river. Fortifications were erected on the second bank, to defend the inhabitants against the attacks of the savages. Soon after the American emigration commenced, four additional streets were laid out on the second bottom, which is a beautiful plain, and on account of the width of the streets, the coolness and airiness of the situation, is preferred for places of residence.

From the opposite side of the Mississippi, the appearance of St. Louis is very imposing. It extends along the river for nearly two miles, and the shore is every where lined with steam-boats,

keel-boats, ferry-boats, and other craft. The gradual ascent of the first bank, and the elevation of the second, is such that it affords a fine view of the whole town.

St. Louis was first settled in 1664 [1764], by a company of merchants, to whom M. D'Abbadie, the director general of Louisiana, had given an exclusive grant for the commerce with the Indian nations on the Missouri; and for the security and encouragement of this settlement, the staff of the French officers were ordered to remove thither, upon rendering Fort Chartres to the English. The company built a large house and four stores here; and in the year 1770, there were about 40 private houses, and as many families. The French garrison then consisted of a captain commandant, two lieutenants, a fort major, a sergeant, a corporal, and 20 men.¹ St. Louis now flourished, and became the parent of a number of little villages on the Missouri and Mississippi, such as Carondelet, St. Charles, Portage des Sioux, Bon-Homme, and St. Ferdinand. It carried on a lucrative trade with the Indians, and remained in peace with them until the year 1780, when the outrageous policy which is pursued even to the present time, was the means of producing the most alarming effects. An expedition was fitted out by the British at Michillimacinac, in order to conquer the towns on the right bank of the Mississippi, then a part of the dominions of Spain, whose king had taken a part in favour of the independence of the United States. The expedition was directed against St. Louis, then the capital of Upper Louisiana; after the fall of which, the conquest of the remaining towns and villages would follow as a matter of course. To accomplish this object, a body of 1500 Indians and 140 British proceeded, in a number of canoes and light boats, through Lake Michigan and the Illinois river, to St. Louis. "On the approach of so formidable an enemy, the inhabitants, despairing of successful resistance, deputed one of their most respectable citizens, the

1. Pittman's history of the British settlements on the Mississippi. Lond. 1770.

late Charles Gratiot, father of Col. Gratiot of the U. S. corps of engineers, to solicit the aid of Gen. G. R. Clark, then encamped with his men on the American bottom.

"Although the general was well acquainted with their superior number, he having but 400 men—although he well knew the hazard of attempting the passage of such a river as the Mississippi in the face of a superior force, and without having a retreat in case of a defeat; and although St. Louis was without the limits of the United States, and he had no authority to carry his arms so far—besides many other serious objections, he waved [*sic*] them all. He saw in the inhabitants of St. Louis a people devoted to destruction, because their sovereign was an ally of his country, and he determined at once to carry his arms to their relief. He had but 400 men, but they were the riflemen of the west, the daring sons of the forest, to whom danger was sport, hardship was pastime, death was nothing, and glory every thing. He led 200 of his gallant band to the ferry opposite the town, and made a demonstration of crossing, while 200 more were sent down to cross under a bend of the river, about 3 miles below. The Indians were disconcerted at the appearance of this unexpected force, and retired, killing 60 of the inhabitants, and carrying 30 into captivity. This terrible year, (1780) is well remembered by the old inhabitants, who refer to it in their conversations as a date, by the description of *L'annee du coup*; the year of the attack."²

After this time, the inhabitants suffered but little from the incursions of the Indians. During the same year, the town was fortified by M. Dom. Francois de Crusat, lieutenant colonel and lieutenant governor of the western section of the country of the Illinois. (See *Plan of St. Louis* [omitted here].) It was entirely enclosed with pickets. On the river, at each ex-

2. For particulars of this attack, I am indebted to Col. Benton, U. States senator from the state of Missouri. See *St. Louis Enquirer*, Aug. 5, 1820. Also his speech in the senate of the U. States on the bill to perfect French and Spanish land titles in Missouri.

tremity of the town, were half moons mounted with artillery. After the peace of 1783, these works were suspended. Some years after, the garrison on the hill was completed, and about 1797, when an invasion was again expected from Canada, four stone towers were erected, and also a block house at the lower part of the town. The spaces between these were well picketted, and a ditch surrounded the whole. — Fortunately, however, these works were never needed. Many of them are still standing.

The population of St. Louis increased but little until after the cession of Louisiana to the United States, when its advantageous situation, and the alluring prospects of gain which it presented, made it at once the centre of a vast emigration. The emigrants were principally men of business and adventurers, who considered it only as a temporary residence. On this account, very little improvement was made in the town until about 1812, when several new houses were erected in the American style.—After this, the number of houses increased rapidly. Mechanics of all descriptions received high wages—trade was brisk, and money plenty, and St. Louis had all the appearance of a great commercial town. But, as could have been easily foreseen, this state of things did not continue long, for it was forced and unnatural. Speculators had purchased large quantities of land on a credit at very high prices—merchants had purchased in the same way immense stocks of goods in the eastern cities; and almost the whole business was transacted upon a fictitious capital, which was frequently transferred from one to another. Consequently, when the credits for lands and goods had expired, when it was necessary for each man to depend upon his own capital, a sad reverse was experienced. Not having any considerable articles of export, every dollar of specie was remitted to the east. In the midst of this, the banks failed, creditors suffered, confidence was destroyed, and for a time, business was almost completely stopped. This state of things, however, was not peculiar to this place, for at the same time a similar depression existed in every part of the

country. This, without any of the local causes above mentioned, would have perhaps produced serious effects, for it could not be supposed, that situated as Missouri was, the pressure which commenced on the Atlantic, and which had spread rapidly over the middle states, would bear lightly upon her.

Although the assertion may be considered paradoxical, the situation of St. Louis and of Missouri, is at present more prosperous than ever. The citizens have, in a great measure, abandoned their wild and visionary schemes of money-making.— They are now directing their attention to the cultivation of the soil, and their inexhaustible mines of lead and iron. Domestic manufactures are substituted for foreign fineries, and industry and frugality have taken the place of idleness and dissipation.

According to an enumeration taken by the editor of the 'St. Louis Directory,' this town contained in May, 1821, 650 dwelling houses, 232 of which are built of brick and stone, and 419 of wood. The majority of the dwellings erected by the French, are one story high, and surrounded with a piazza. Those which have recently been built by the Americans, are principally of brick. There are frequently attached to these dwellings large gardens, which are under good cultivation.

By the same enumeration, it appears that the population of this place is 5600. Its astonishing increase in this respect, within the last few years, is worthy of notice. In 1799, it contained 925 inhabitants; in 1810, 1000; and in 1818, 3500.— from which it appears, that from the year 1799 to 1810, this place remained nearly stationary; and that since the latter, its population has increased in nearly a six-fold ratio.

St. Louis as yet contains few public buildings. Among these, the Roman Catholic chapel, college, and Baptist church are the most conspicuous. The Catholic chapel is a very spacious edifice, and is handsomely furnished with paintings, vases, and other ornaments. Among the former is a splendid one, presented to Bishop Du Bourg by the present king of France. Other distinguished Catholics of Europe have been very liberal

in their donations to this church. In the academy or college which is attached to this establishment, a complete and extensive system of education is adopted. Among the other advantages is that of a library, containing about 8000 volumes, the property of the bishop, but which, through his generosity, is open to those who wish to examine its valuable contents.

The Baptist church is situated on Third-street, and is a fine spacious brick building. Arrangements are also making for the erection of a Presbyterian church, on one of the lots facing the public square.³

The Museum in St. Louis is well worthy the attention of the curious and scientific. It is the private property of Gov. Clark, through whose liberality it is continually open for the admission of visitors. It is handsomely arranged, and consists of rich Indian dresses, ornaments, instruments of war, skins of different animals, minerals, fossils, and other interesting and curious articles and specimens, collected by himself in his travels, and presented to him at different times by Indian chiefs and traders. It is probably the best collection of Indian curiosities in this country.

In addition to the school above mentioned, there are several others, in some of which the classics and higher branches of English education are taught. By an act passed in 1817, these were placed under the government of seven trustees. They instructed Mr. Benton to petition congress to permit them to sell a portion of the school lands, for the purpose of raising funds for their support. Whether this has been effected, I have not as yet learnt.

St. Louis was incorporated in 1809, and placed under the government of five trustees, who are elected annually. The

3. It is honourable to the citizens of St. Louis, that during the years 1819 and 20, upwards of eighteen thousand dollars were subscribed for the erection of places of public worship. Considering that the whole number of inhabitants at that time did not much exceed 4000, and that of these more than one third were unable to contribute, their liberality will not suffer in comparison with that of the eastern cities.

limits of the incorporation are as follows: "Beginning at Roy's mills, on the bank of the Mississippi river; thence running sixty arpents⁴ west; thence south on said line of sixty arpents in the rear, until the same comes to the Barriere denoyer; thence due south, until it comes to the Sugar-loaf; thence due east to the Mississippi; from thence by the Mississippi, along low water mark, to the place first mentioned."

When this place was first laid out, lots were very cheap. Owing to the desire of the French and Spaniards to encourage emigration, large grants were made to different individuals, and these were sold at a very low rate. But during and since the late war, the value of the lots, particularly those on the principal streets, has increased astonishingly. A circumstance which operates against the improvement of the town, is, that many of the old inhabitants own very large lots, which they are unwilling to build on themselves, or dispose of to others.

In regard to building materials, St. Louis is very advantageously situated. The whole bank of the river here consists of limestone, which can be quarried with the greatest ease. This also furnishes lime of a good quality. There are immense beds of clay in the upper part of the town, from which large quantities of brick are annually made. Lumber is brought down the Gasconade and Missouri rivers, and sold here at a very cheap rate.

There are numerous fine springs of water in the vicinity of this place, but the digging of wells is attended with uncommon difficulty. About 15 or 20 feet below the surface of the ground, is a stratum of limestone of more than six feet in thickness, through which it is often necessary to blast. The expense of these wells frequently exceeds 1000 dollars. It is

4. Surveys were made, under the French and Spanish governments, by the *arpent*, not the acre. "The following formula contains the elements to reduce the one into the other, viz. 605 arpents make 512 ac. stated thus:—If 605 ar. : 512 ac. :: 100 ar. : The *arpent* is used also as a measure of length, being 180 feet or 30 toises French, equal to 192 feet English or American, nearly." *Darby's Emigrant's Guide*.

worthy of remark, that on the "Hill," the water is much better, and more easily obtained than in the lower parts of the town. In digging these wells, it is necessary to use every precaution, as large quantities of carbonic acid gas are frequently generated in the course of a few hours. During the year 1820, four persons perished from the effects of this substance, in this vicinity. The existence of this deleterious gas can always be detected by letting down a lighted candle; and no person should descend, unless he has previously tried this experiment.

The commerce of this place is very considerable. This is carried on by steam-boats, barges, and keel-boats. The annual imports of this town, are computed at upwards of \$2,000,000.—Furs, peltries, and lead ore, are as yet the principal articles of export, but to these will soon be added many others no less valuable. In 1819, an association was formed here, called the '*Missouri Fur Company*,' for the purpose of trading on the Missouri and its tributaries. Their capital amounts to upwards of \$70,000, and they have already extended their establishments to the Mandan villages.

Wood is at present the principal article of fuel used in St. Louis, and with this, it is principally supplied from the American bottom, on the opposite side of the river. A large quantity, however, is brought from the "commons," seven or eight miles below the town. Many of the inhabitants supply themselves with the *drift wood*, an immense quantity of which is annually brought down the Missouri, and deposited on the sand bar in front of the town. But as coal is very abundant within a short distance of this place, it is probable that in a few years it will completely supercede the use of wood.

It has been frequently observed throughout this work, that in consequence of the large quantities of sand which are brought down by the Missouri, whenever there is an accidental obstruction to the current, a portion of it is deposited, and this, adding to the obstruction, increases every subsequent deposit. By this means, a bar of two miles in length, and a

176

West

East



quarter of a mile in width, has been formed in front of the town of St. Louis. I have been informed by old inhabitants, that many years ago, it was much larger than it is at present, and that it was under cultivation. After this time, it was entirely carried away, and the river continued in its natural course for a number of years.—About 10 or 12 years ago, this bar again commenced forming, and has ever since continued to increase. The manner in which it was formed, will be explained by a reference to the plan which is annexed. Opposite to the upper part of the town, is a small island. The greatest volume of water descends on the Illinois, or east side, and wears away the newly formed alluvion. The current of the water which descends on the west, or Missouri side, continues close to the island; and when it reaches its southern extremity, shoots across in a southwesterly direction, and strikes the rocky shore at *a*. From this point, the current is again turned in a southeasterly direction, and shoots across to the east side of the river, where, uniting with the main current, it continues along the east shore for nearly three miles. It then again crosses the river, and strikes the rocky bluff at *b*. From this sketch it appears, that the volume of water, *e e e e*, is, as it were, pent up, and must necessarily deposit a considerable portion of the sand which it contains.

If this bar continues to increase as it has done for several years past, it will be greatly injurious to the town. It will probably extend north, and unite with the island *c*, by which means boats will be completely prevented from landing here.—It therefore becomes an interesting question, whether this bar can be removed by artificial means. The cause of its formation, will at once point out the most feasible plan for accomplishing this object. If any obstruction could be created on the east side of the river, by which means the current directly below the island, could be thrown over to the bar, it is probable that in a short time it would be swept away. A stone pier constructed as *dd*, if it could be made sufficiently strong to resist

the current of the river, (which is indeed extremely doubtful) would have this effect. The removal might be further assisted by digging a small canal along the bank, at *f f f*, which could give the current an opportunity to act upon both sides of the bar.

In suggesting this plan, I am well aware of the difficulty and expense which would attend its accomplishment. But when we consider the importance of this emporium of two states, which are destined to become populous and wealthy—when we look at the vast works of art which have already been constructed in other states; and when we reflect that their inhabitants are gradually emigrating to the west, and will soon crowd the banks of the Missouri and Mississippi, we are irresistibly led to the conclusion, that all these difficulties will be surmounted by their industry, ingenuity and enterprise.

In the vicinity of St. Louis, are a number of mounds, the relative position of which are shown upon the map. They are similar to those which are every where found in the valley of the Mississippi.

St. Louis is in latitude $38^{\circ} 35'$ north.

*Testimony before the
Recorder of Land Titles,
St. Louis, 1825*

by

Auguste Chouteau

The uncertainty and confusion that developed about land titles in Missouri after the transfer of Louisiana resulted in the sitting of a number of boards of commissioners appointed to scrutinize the titles presented by claimants. The first board, named in 1805, and its successors rejected so many claims that it was not until 1833 that most of them were settled, although others remained on the books for more than another decade before final action. Of the several boards sitting in St. Louis that directed by Theodore Hunt, Recorder of Land Titles, in 1825 has been the most productive historically, for full record was kept of the depositions of many St. Louisans concerning the ownership of land in the town and its vicinity. This body evidence, popularly known as Hunt's Minutes, was transcribed in 1908 by Idress Head, then Librarian of the Missouri Historical Society, from the originals in the Land Office at Jefferson City, Missouri. The present text of four depositions by Auguste Chouteau is from the Head typescripts in the Missouri Historical Society archives.

Testimony before the Recorder of Land Titles, St .Louis, 1825

Auguste Chouteau being duly sworn, says that as soon as peace was made in seventeen hundred and Sixty two, between France and England, Mr Dabbaddie being Director General & Military & Civil Commandant of the whole Province of Louisiana, granted the necessary powers to a Company under the name of Laclede Liguete, Maxan & Co to trade with the Indians of the Missouri, and those west of the Mississippi above the Missouri, to the River Saint Pierre—In consequence of which, Mr Laclede took Command of the first armament or expedition, accompinied by Auguste Chouteau and others, and they started from New Orleans on the third of August A D seventeen hundred and Sixty three. On the third of November seventeen hundred and Sixty three Mr Laclede with his company, arrived at Saint Genevieve, but finding no place suitable for the Storage of his Goods, and being still too far from the Missouri, He proceeded on to fort de Chartres, which was still in possession of the french Troops—On the tenth of February A D seventeen hundred and Sixty four, Mr Laclede sent Auguste Chouteau this Deponent, at the head of a Party of Mechanics of all trades amounting to upwards of Thirty in number, to select a place suitable for an Establishment, such as He proposed; on the fifteenth of February A D seventeen hundred and Sixty four, they landed at a place which they thought convenient for the purposes of the Company, and immediately proceeded to Cut down Trees, draw the lines of a Town, and build the house where this Deponent at present resides—Mr Laclede on his arrival named the Town Saint Louis, in Honour of the King of France

After the foundation of Saint Louis, which was on the fifteenth of February A D seventeen hundred and Sixty four, the most remarkable events are—

The arrival on the seventeenth of July A D seventeen hundred and Sixty five of Mr stange de belle rive, at S' Louis with his troops from fort de Chartres, together with the Government Officers After his arrival Saint Louis was considered as the Capital of Upper Louisiana—

On the eleventh of August A D seventeen hundred and Sixty Eight, Mr Rioux arrived at Saint Louis, and took possession of upper Louisiana in the name of his Catholic Majesty the King of Spain.

The Revolution of New Orleans on the twenty-ninth of October A D Seventeen hundred and Sixty Eight, caused the evacuation of Upper Louisiana by the Spanish Troops, and there [*sic*] departure for New Orleans the seventeenth day of July A D seventeen hundred and Sixty Nine—

On the twenty ninth of November A D Seventeen hundred and Seventy Mr. Pierre Piernas arrived in Saint Louis with the troops under His command, and again took possession of Upper Louisiana in the name of his Catholic Majesty—

On the twentieth of June A D seventeen hundred and seventy Eight Mr Laclede Died at Arkansas—

(Annee du Grand Coup) On the Sixth of May A D seventeen hundred and seventy [*sic*] Eighty, St. Louis was attacked by fourteen hundred Indians and Canadians—

(Annee des Grandes eaux) The Mississippi rose twenty feet above highest known water marks—this deponent went in a Boat (for the purpose of procuring Plank) from Saint Louis (through the Woods growing in the American Bottom) to Kaskaskia—this was in April A D Seventeen Hundred and Eighty five—

(Annees des Galeres) The arrival of the Gallies with Spanish troops under the Command of Coll Don Carlos Howard A D Seventeen hundred and ninety Seven—

(Annee du Grand hiver) the year of the Cold Winter was the winter of A D seventeen hundred and ninety nine and Eighteen hundred Reaumure Thermometer was at (as far as he recollects it was thirty two degrees below Zero—

(Annee de la Picotte) the fifteen of May A D Eighteen hundred and One the Small Pox made its first appearance in Saint Louis—

The Cession of Louisiana to the American Government by France, was known in Saint Louis in the Evening at seven OClock, sometime in the Month of August A D Eighteen hundred and Three—

Major Amos Stoddard arrived in Saint Louis on the fourth of March A D Eighteen hundred and four, to take possession of upper Louisiana for the United States—

Vuide Poche was founded by Mr Delor Detergette A D seventeen hundred and Sixty seven, and was named Carondelet in seventeen hundred and ninety Six—

Florisant was founded by Borosier Dunegan A D seventeen hundred and Sixty Nine, and called S'Ferdinand in seventeen hundred and Ninety Six—

Les petites Cottes was established (founded by) Blanchette Chasseur seventeen hundred and sixty Nine and was called St. Charles in Eighteen hundred and four—

The Illinois Indians claimed the land where S'Louis now stands when this Deponent first came here—this deponent. . . .

[Signed] Aug. Chouteau

Subscribed and Sworn to before me

April 18th 1825

Theodore Hunt

Recorder Land Titles

August Chouteau being duly sworn, says that A D Seventeen hundred and Sixty Six immediately [*sic*] there was grants made in a Common field near the Town of Saint Louis for a Common field then called Petite Praria, which is near to where Judge Bent now lives, South of the Town. In front of the whole of the land on the South of the Town where Mr Soulard now lives, there was a Bottom covered with heavy timber, which ended at the Creek just adjoining Judge Bent's place, and immediately back of this Bottom on the Bluff, was a Prairia which is the Place now spoken of and was called the little Prairia. some few years after, a Band of the Peoria Indians obtained Permission to build a village, and they did build one immediately where Judge Bent's house now stands, and in after times, this Prairia or Common field was called Prairia du Village Sauvage—At the time the Indians built their village where Judge Bent now lives, their principal chiefs name was the Petit Dinde or Little Turkey—A D seventeen hundred and sixty Nine or about that time, there was a grant made for a Common field called Prarie Des Noyer, to be divided in Lots—The Bounds are as follows, on the South where the Common field lands of Carondelet as they are now or where [*were?*], when the Government of the U S took possession of this Country, and North by a division between the Big Praria and the Prairia Des Noyer, at the End of this Deponent's Mill Tract, which was called Cul de Sac—This deponent further States that of His own knowledge the Grand Prairia was laid off as a Common field about the year A D Seventeen hundred and Sixty Six and its Bounded on the North by the little River called Marais Castor, and as the land or lots was granted, they extended South, until they eventually joined on to the Cul de Sac, which separated it from the Prairia Des Noyer, and this deponent further States of his own knowledge, that A D Seventeen hundred and Ninety, there was a Common field fence, that Connected with the fence of the Common field of Carondelet and Extended so as to go round and include Prairia Des

Noyer, Cul de Sac and the Big Prairia, and the land enclosed within this, was very generally under cultivation for several years—

[Signed] Aug. Chouteau

Sworn to before me

June 3d 1825

Theodore Hunt Recorder L.T.



August Chouteau being duly sworn, says That in the Year A D Seventeen hundred and Sixty four, He this Deponent surveyed the Sight for the Town of Saint Louis, and made a Plat of the same; that the Main Streets where [were] all of them laid out to be thirty Six feet french measure wide, and all the Cross Streets were laid out to be thirty feet french measure wide, that the Blocks were generally laid out to be two hundred and forty feet fronting on the Main Streets, and running Back three hundred feet to the other Main Streets—and the Grants to the Town lots were always intended to be bounded by the said Plan or Plot above mentioned, so as not to encroach upon the Streets—This Deponent further says, that He is well acquainted with what was the custom as to the Grants to the lots fronting on the Mississippi in this Town, which was allways sanctioned by the Custom of the Country, to viz that there was allways a space left between the lots so situated (and fronting on the Mississippi) and the Mississippi for a Tow or road, and this deponent further says, He never did know (during the time the French or Spanish Authorities Governed this Country) of any lots being fenced in, down to the River Mississippi, either to High Water, or low water mark—further this deponent says, that A D seventeen hundred and Eighty, He again surveyed the Town according to the original Plan, a copy of which Survey has this day been shown him by Theodore Hunt the U S Recorder of Land Titles, and He this Deponent further

says, that since the first laying out of the Town, the Mississippi has washed away some land in front of said Town as it was laid out—

[Signed] Aug. Chouteau

Sworn to before me

Sept 8 1825

Theodore Hunt Recorder L.T.



August Chouteau being duly sworn, in relation to the Public square claimed by the Mayor, Alderman and Citizens of the Town of Saint Louis—says, that when He first came to the present Town of Saint Louis, and laid out the Town under the direction of Laclede Legest, they established the ware house where the Market House now stands, they then intended to have a Street fronting the Mississippi, running back, three hundred feet, after that, the Plan was altered, and a Main street was laid out leaving lots of about One hundred and fifty feet, between it and the River, and the Town was laid out and surveyed by this Deponent upon that plan after this the ware House was removed to the square where He at present resides and when the Spanish authorities came to this Town, Mr Piernas and Perez the Lieut Gov granted the South part to Beneto Vasquez and Boneventure Collel—and the ballance was reserved for a Place Public, for to the knowledge of this Deponent, Madam Loisel the then Midwife of the Place applied to the Lieut Gov Perez for a lot in this square, and Mr Perez told Her, it should not be granted but should be reserved (what was not already granted) for the Use of the Inhabitants, and it has remained so from that time to this day—This deponent does hereby declare that this square belongs to the Inhabitants of the Town of S' Louis for their Use as a Public Place, and if any persons should contend that it does not, but that it belongs to the School Lands, that He having been the first in possession

of the same, will contend for His right to the same, He only
relinquishing it for the benefit of the Mayor, Alderman and
Citizens of the Town of Saint Louis as a Place Public—

[Signed] Aug. Chouteau

Sworn to before me

Nov 16 1825

Theodore Hunt Recorder L.T.

*A Sketch of the History of the
First Settlement of St. Louis*

by

"A Creole"

On 24 January 1831 there appeared in the St. Louis Beacon a sketch of the history of the founding of St. Louis signed "A Creole." The writer had been stirred to action by some paragraphs in the Beacon a week earlier, extracted from a Catholic newspaper, in which (according to "A Creole") it had been stated "that St. Louis was founded by Mr. Pierre de la Clede on the 15 of February, 1754, and that he cut the first trees on the spot where the city now stands. As that statement contains an anacronism, and is otherwise not altogether correct, I send you the following sketch of the history of the first settlement of the city of St. Louis." The offending article had appeared in the Catholic Press of Hartford, Connecticut, on 4 and 11 December 1830 (pp. 86-87, 90). It was not intended as a history of the town but as a sketch of the diocese; it was not signed. "A Creole" has not been identified.

A Sketch of the History of the First Settlement of St. Louis

By a treaty of peace made and concluded in 1763, Canada, with the whole territory belonging to France eastward of the middle of the Mississippi river to the Iberville, thence through the middle of that river to the lakes Maurepas and Pontchartrain to the Gulf of Mexico, was ceded by France to Great Britain. By this treaty the boundaries of the British provinces were extended southward to the Gulf of Mexico and westward to the Mississippi, the navigation of which to its mouth was to be free to both nations. When this treaty was concluded, Mr. Dabbadie was Director General, commander civil and military of the Province of Louisiana; he was ordered to deliver to Great Britain the aforesaid ceded territory. He had, about that time, granted to a company of merchants of New Orleans, the exclusive commerce of furs and peltries with the Indian nations of the Missouri and those west of the Mississippi, above the Missouri river to the river St. Peter. This company, under the style of Pierre Laclède, Liguette, Maxant and company, by virtue of their privilege, sent from New Orleans a considerable expedition, to convey up the Mississippi the necessary goods and merchandize for their trade with the Indians, under the command and direction of Mr. Laclède, principal share-holder, who was chosen by the company, as being the most capable to conduct the expedition and to transact the business of the company.

There was then, on the west side of the Mississippi, but the small and weak settlement of Ste. Genevieve, in which there

was not a house sufficiently large to contain the merchandize of the company, and its situation being otherwise inconvenient, and not proper for the transaction of the business of the company, and being moreover too far from the mouth of the Missouri, Mr. Laclède resolved, for the time being, to land his merchandize at Fort Chartres, although on the English side of the Mississippi, the French troops having not yet evacuated it, waiting for the arrival of the English. Being there, after Mr. Laclède had sent his merchandize for the Indian trade up the Missouri, as well as up the Mississippi, he resolved to look for a proper situation on the west side of the Mississippi river, where he could make a proper settlement for the purposes of his commerce, which would be more convenient than Ste. Genevieve; whereupon, after travelling over the country, the site where the city of St. Louis now stands, was chosen, (which was then covered with splendid forest trees, free of undergrowth,) as well on account of its beautiful situation as its proximity to the Missouri, and the excellence of its soil. Having returned to Fort Chartres, he employed all proper means in his power, to procure the necessary things for the beginning of his settlement; and having hired workmen of different trades, on the 10th day of February, 1764, he sent an armament under the command of the late Col. Auguste Chouteau, who had accompanied him in all his travels, and who was then very young, with orders to build a house at the place they had chosen. Mr. De Leclède being obliged to remain at Fort Chartres, to finish his business before the arrival of the English, Col. Auguste Chouteau commenced the settlement on the 15th day of February, 1764, and built the first house, near where the market house now stands; and soon thereafter, several inhabitants of Fort Chartres and Cahokia, came thither and settled. These first settlers were favored and encouraged by Mr. De Leclède, who gratuitously gave them provisions and tools of all kinds; conveyances to transport their effects and families to this new settlement, and even or-

dered them to be helped by his men, in the building of their houses. Col. Chouteau and these new inhabitants, full of gratitude for the liberality of Mr. De Laclede, desired to give his name to this settlement, but he could not consent to it, saying that he desired it to bear the name of St. Louis, which was that of the King, of whom they were all subjects. Mr. De Laclede died at the post of Arkansas on the 20th June, 1778, when many of the inhabitants were about to abandon the settlement, but were prevented from doing so by Col. Chouteau, who prevailed with them to remain, and furnished them with the means of support. He continued to reside in St. Louis until his death, which took place on the 24th of February, 1829—sixty-four years after the founding of the city—having seen St. Louis merged in a wilderness, surrounded with different nations of Indians, rise to its promising and populous condition.

*History of
St. Louis*

by

Wilson Primm

In the Illinois Monthly Magazine for April, 1832, there appeared the first of two installments of a "History of St. Louis." The headnote informed readers that the article had been "prepared for the St. Louis Lyceum, by a young gentleman of that city, who has been so obliging as to give it to us for publication, at our earnest solicitation. Having been carefully compiled from authentic sources, we have no doubt of its accuracy." Its author, Wilson Primm, in the opening remarks of his address at the Anniversary celebration, 15 February 1847, said that he had first delivered it before the St. Louis Lyceum in 1831. Since the call for organizing that institution was published on 19 November 1831 and the first meeting held a week later, Primm's lecture must have been presented sometime in December, although no newspaper references to it have been found. At the 1847 Celebration he gave the same speech somewhat revised and rearranged with some additions of nineteenth century material. During the 1840's and later Primm contributed occasional articles to the Reveille, the Missouri Republican, and other local papers on early days in St. Louis. His "History of St. Louis" (1831 version) was reprinted in the Missouri Historical Society Collections, IV, No. 2 (1913), 160-193, annotated by William Clark Breckenridge. For the life of the St. Louis-born writer consult Breckenridge, "Biographical Sketch of the Judge Wilson Primm," Ibid., 127-159. The text chosen for reproduction is that of the Illinois Monthly Magazine, II (April and May, 1832), 312-321, 355-365, in preference to that of 1847; the latter adds nothing to the story of early days.

History of St. Louis

Spain, France, and England, in the seventeenth century, claimed, it is well known, the greater part of North America, by right of conquest, or of discoveries made under their patronage and direction. The treaty of Aix la Chapelle, in 1748, with regard to these three kingdoms, contained a provision for the restitution of the conquests which had been made from each other, but was wholly silent as to the boundaries of their possessions in America. In a country newly discovered, and but little known, it was natural that claims so extensive and undefined should clash, and that the claimants of territory should encroach on each other. Indeed, the subject of boundary, between France and England particularly, had from the first been unsettled, and the source of long and fruitless negotiation. France, besides owning Canada in the north, had, under the discoveries of de la Salle, settled the country on the Mississippi in the south. In 1753, she determined to connect her northern and southern possessions by a chain of posts along the lakes and the river Ohio. Fort du Quesne, now Pittsburgh, and Fort de Chartres, the ruins of which are yet to be seen on the eastern shore of the Mississippi, were links of that chain of military out-posts. Such a proceeding, if effected, threatened to be highly detrimental to the interests of the English, by giving them a frontier of great extent to defend against the Indians and French, in the event of war, and by confining them to the narrow borders of the Atlantic. It was consequently resisted, and the protracted war ensued, in which our Washington first displayed his military skill. From America, the war was transferred to Europe, waged without intermission for seven years, and only ended with the treaty

of Fontainebleau in 1762, which was ratified by the treaty of Paris, of the year following. By this treaty, England acquired all the country *east* of the Mississippi, which after the adoption of the constitution, was ceded by Virginia to the United States, under the name of the North-western Territory. By a secret article in that treaty, also, all the country *west* of the Mississippi, called Louisiana, was ceded to France by Spain [*sic*]. In 1800, it was retroceded to France, and by her, in the same year, sold to the United States, for fifteen millions of dollars.

Spain did not take possession of her newly acquired territory until 1769, when Count O'Reilly, invested with extraordinary powers, and at the head of the considerable body of troops, landed at New-Orleans, took possession of the country in the name of his Catholic Majesty, abolished the existing form of government, and established a new one, conformable to the laws of Spain. Until this change was effected, however, French laws remained in force in the province, and the officers of the French government continued to exercise their functions as if no change had taken place. In fact, the subjects of the French monarch were not aware that they had passed under a foreign domination. The mild administration of his government had endeared it to them, and it was probably owing to this fact, that Spain delayed taking possession, and that when she assumed the reins, it was thought prudent to clothe her representatives with military power, for the purpose of awing the disaffected into submission.

"In the year 1762, Mr. Dabadie, being Director General and military and civil Governor of the Province of Louisiana, granted to a company under the name Laclede Liguette, Maxan and Company, the necessary powers to trade with the Indians of the Missouri, and those west of the Mississippi, above the Missouri, as far as the river St. Peter." (*Deposition of Aug. Chouteau, on file in the office of the Recorder of land titles at St. Louis.*) The traffic in furs and peltry with these Indians, though of intrinsic value, was rendered unavailable, from the

want of convenient stations near the mouth of the Missouri, to serve as places of deposit for the merchandise, which was the basis of the trade. This disadvantage, together with the difficulty and risk attendant upon the traffic, was felt by the French government in Louisiana, and disposed them to grant privileges and immunities to such as should engage in it. An exclusive charter, such as that above mentioned, could not but be beneficial both to the grantor and grantee. To the latter, it opened a mine of wealth, dangerous, certainly, in the exploration, but highly profitable, if managed with industry and prudence: to the former, the advantage consisted in this, that the trade would, in time, become a source of revenue; the navigation of the Mississippi would cause the settlement and improvement of the country bordering upon it; and, finally, each trading post, each place of deposit, would become a nucleus, round which, plantations would be formed and villages arise. Such, indeed, was partly the result; for soon after the settlement of St. Louis, towns and villages sprung up throughout Upper Louisiana, and the interior assumed the lively appearance of civilization and industry.

“In consequence of the powers with which he was invested, Mr. Laclede formed an expedition, at the head of which, he was placed, and started from New-Orleans on the 3d of August, 1763. On the 3d of November, in the same year, he arrived at Ste. Genevieve, but finding no place suitable for the storage of his goods, and being still too far from the Missouri, a proximity to which, was an object with him, he proceeded on to Fort de Chartres, which was still in possession of the French troops.” (*Dep. of A. Chouteau.*) Thence he proceeded immediately towards the mouth of the Missouri river, in search of a spot suitable for an establishment of the kind he had in view. Having fixed upon a site, he returned to Fort de Chartres, from whence he started again in the beginning of the month of February, 1764, with the men whom he had brought with him from New-Orleans, a few from Ste. Genevieve, and some

from the Fort. On his route, he passed through the town of Cahokia, engaging several families to go with him to the proposed establishment. On the fifteenth, they reached the place of destination, proceeded to cut down trees and draw the lines of a town, which was called, by *Mr. Laclede, the founder*, St. Louis, in honor of Louis XV., the reigning monarch of France.

In several sketches of the history of St. Louis, which have appeared in the public papers, the honor of having founded it, is awarded to Mr. Auguste Chouteau. These statements, uncontroverted as they have been, have caused the belief which generally prevails, that he was the founder. The writer risks something, no doubt, in opposing it, but the task which he has assumed, of presenting not only a history of this town, but a *correct* one, constrains him to do it. The evidence, at least, which opposes the popular belief, is so strong, as to vindicate the writer from the imputation of wishing to pluck from the brow of merit, the chaplet of honor; and the feelings of delicacy, which, under other circumstances, might be indulged, must now be laid aside.

The writer had frequently heard doubts suggested on this subject, but the question was not then of sufficient interest to him to prompt an inquiry. When he undertook, however, to prepare this paper, it became necessary to arrive, if possible, at the truth. With that view, he had recourse to several of the French inhabitants, in the truth of whose statements, he knew the most implicit confidence could be placed. The persons thus applied to, are aged, the most of them having been born within ten or fifteen years after the foundation of the town. They knew nothing *personally*, but all concurred in saying that Mr. Laclede was the founder; that Mr. Chouteau, was a boy, when the town was founded; that thus they had always heard their fathers say. This tradition, though strong evidence, was still not sufficient. The writer called on a lady, who is said to have been the first woman that came to St. Louis.

Mrs. L[ecompt], though very aged, blind, and almost deprived of the use of her limbs, still retains the faculties of her mind, strong and unimpaired. Her recollection of the scenes through which she has passed, is perfect; in addition to which, she has that happy faculty of manner and language, united with a spirit of politeness, which renders the communication of intelligence both striking and agreeable. The details which she gave, are so clear and connected, that it is impossible to doubt them. She was born in the year 1745; in the year 1763, being eighteen years old, she was married and living in Cahokia, when, in the month of November, as she believes, Mr. Laclede passed through that town, on his way towards the mouth of the Missouri, in search of a situation to form an establishment. In the month of February, in the following year, he again passed through the town, with the men he had brought from New-Orleans, with some from Fort de Chartres, and some from Ste. Genevieve; amongst these, was Auguste Chouteau, then a boy of about fifteen years of age. Mr. Laclede induced several persons to go from Cahokia, to his proposed establishment, and amongst others, her husband. She remained in Cahokia until the close of the month of May, when the Mississippi rising, overflowed the town, and inundated the floor of the house in which she lived; a Mr. Trotier, a resident of the town, offered her a refuge in his house, which she refused, on the ground that she was compelled to go to *Pain Court*, (the name that St. Louis acquired at that time, from the scarcity of provisions, which were brought from Ste. Genevieve,) she might as well do it at once. Accordingly, she and her husband moved to St. Louis, in the beginning of June. There were then only two or three houses, or rather huts, in St. Louis, one of which belonged to Mr. Laclede. The men were employed in building for Mr. Laclede, the house in which Auguste Chouteau resided before his death; while she, and the greater part of the settlers, lived for a time on scaffolds, elevated six or seven feet above the ground, to protect themselves from the wild beasts which

abounded. Mr. Laclede gave lots of ground to the settlers, in admeasurement of which, Auguste Chouteau generally carried the chain for him.

Another lady, Mrs. B[razeau], remarkable for her piety, intelligence, and amiable disposition, states that when about eleven or twelve years old, she came from Kaskaskia, where she then resided, on a visit to St. Louis. When she first knew Mr. Chouteau, he was a little boy, some three years older than herself. She was godmother to Mr. Chouteau's wife, and he on that account, also called her godmother; when she would reprove him for it, on the ground that it made her appear older than himself, he invariably stated the difference between their ages to be three years. Mrs. B. is now seventy-eight years old, which would make Mr. Chouteau, at the foundation of St. Louis, about fourteen years of age.

Two other persons, who were among the first settlers, have made statements similar to the above. Nor are they unsupported. In the Missouri Republican of the 24th February, 1829, we find an obituary notice of Mr. Auguste Chouteau, sanctioned, it is presumed, by his relatives, in which his age, at the time of his death, is stated to have been eighty years. St. Louis had then been founded sixty-five years; consequently, Auguste Chouteau was fifteen years old at the foundation of the city; a fact which, in our opinion, settles the question.

The spot thus selected, was covered with a growth of timber, which extended north and south along the margin of the Mississippi, and west as far as to the prairie. The selection was certainly a happy one. Immediately below the junction of two mighty rivers, and but little above the mouth of another, with a chain of water communication from the Atlantic almost to the Pacific ocean, it seems to have been formed by nature, for the site of a great and populous city, and to have been intended for the *depot* of the greater part of the western country. After its foundation, all that was necessary to bear it along in the career of importance, was enterprise and indus-

try. Fortunately, when the country was transferred to the United States, the commercial advantages of St. Louis, the healthiness of its situation, and the fertility of the soil around and above, attracted to it numbers of energetic men, who have caused it to make rapid strides towards greatness. The immense superiority which its locality gives it, will always ensure it the monopoly of the commerce, and render it the mart of the mineral, agricultural, and fur countries which live above it on both sides of the Mississippi river.

“Seventeen months after the foundation of St. Louis, the Fort de Chartres was evacuated by the French troops.” (*Dep. of Aug. Chouteau.*) The ostensible cause was, that its situation was low, unhealthy, and subject to inundation. The real cause, no doubt, was, that the French, having by the treaty of Paris, ceded the country east of the Mississippi to the English, were obliged to abandon the military posts they possessed in that country. “On the 17th of July, 1765, *M. de St. Ange de belle rive*, the commander of the Fort de Chartres, together with officers and troops, arrived at St. Louis, and assumed the reins of government.” (*Dep. of Aug. Chouteau.*) Whether authority was delegated to him by the Director General, or whether it was a mere assumption of power on his part, cannot now be ascertained; certain it is, that his authority was submitted to by the inhabitants, and immediately after his arrival, St. Louis was considered the capital of Upper Louisiana. Having organized the government, he proceeded early in the spring to parcel out the lands to the settlers.

For this purpose, he called the inhabitants together, and told them that although Mr. Laclède had given them the *possession*, he had not given them *titles* to their lots, and that in order to obviate the disputes that might arise, they must report to him their boundaries, and he would make them *concessions*, by which they would be invested with the right. He accordingly made the *Livre Terrien*, or land book, in which the grants of lots and lands were, not *recorded*, but originally written, and

copies of these grants were made out for the grantees. The people did not consider these concessions as incomplete or inchoate grants, which were to be ratified by some authority higher than that which made them; but as perfect grants, vesting in them the entire *allodium*, independent of any condition, save that of being subject to taxation, and of being improved by the grantee, within a limited time. In fact, the words of the concession, shew this to have been the meaning on the part of the granting party. The mode of obtaining grants, was by petition or *requête*. After referring to the petition, as to its date, the request it contained, the party making it, the concession generally ran thus: "On the day and year aforesaid, at the request of —, we have granted, and do grant to him, his heirs, and assigns, the lot (or piece of land, describing its contents, boundaries, and locality,) which he prays for, with the condition that he shall establish it within a year and a day, and that it shall be subject to the public charges."

"St. Ange."

Nearly the same form of concession was made use of under the Spanish authority. There was generally, however, a stipulation contained in them, that in case the conditions of improvement and cultivation, should not be complied with, the lands should revert to the king. And many instances are found in the *Livre Terrien*, where this resumption has taken place.

Commerce was the first object which the French government had in view in forming establishments in Upper Louisiana, but agriculture became necessary for their support; and subsequently, the populating and improving a large tract of country, became an object of paramount importance. These objects could not be effected without presenting advantages which might induce adventurers to come and settle in the country. Accordingly, the government adopted the plan of making gratuitous grants of land to actual settlers and cultivators. This was the plan upon which the first commandant, St. Ange, acted, and is the same pursued afterwards by Spain.

In the incipient states of the two governments in Upper Louisiana, grants of land were proportioned to the means of the applicant, and always under the express condition of inhabitation or improvement; but towards their close, grants were made to all who chose to apply for them, without condition, to any extent, and of course, without regard to the means of the applicant.

The policy of the government in making gifts of land, was to settle the country. Pursued with a proper spirit, it was certainly well calculated to effect that object; but it seems, at last, to have degenerated into a system of favoritism, tending to enrich a few individuals, at the expense of the royal treasury. The remoteness of the Lieutenant Governors from the seat of the general government, and the extent of authority placed in their hands, perhaps enabled them to disregard the checks which had been placed around them. Certain it is, that until the administration of Mr. Trudeau, the means of the cultivator were taken as the criterion by which the magnitude of a grant was to be regulated. Indeed, until that time, no surveyor was appointed for the province, which may account for the small number, and small size of the grants. The difficulty of locating a large tract of land, and settling its boundaries, may have deterred the inhabitants from applying for, and the Lieutenant Governor from granting them, and thus exceeding his authority. But these obstacles, if they were such, were removed in 1795, by the appointment of a Surveyor General, whose duty it was to mark off, by metes and bounds, such lands as should be granted by the Lieutenant Governor. From this time, that office became a kind of mint for the manufacture of concessions. It is said, that a short time before the change of government from Spanish to American, grants were made out by the ream. This statement, though hyperbolical, is supported to some extent, by the fact, that until the appointment of Soulard as Surveyor General, the number of arpens of land granted, did not exceed 50,000; and that from the date of his appointment, the number of arpens granted, amounted to 2,150,969.

Concessions of the most valuable tracts of land, were thus made in a negligent manner, their boundaries not being defined with accuracy; and even now cover the face of the country, conflicting with each other, to the great perplexity of the courts of law, to the injury of the concessionaries themselves, and by retarding the march of improvement, to the disadvantage of the State. Many laws have been passed by Congress, for the purpose of settling these claims, but they have been ineffectual, or only partially beneficial. But as the powers of the Lieutenant Governors, and the principles upon which they acted, are now better understood, it is presumed that some plan will be adopted to secure the claimants in their rights, or to throw these lands open to the enterprise and industry of our citizens, by exposing them to sale.

Under the administration of St. Ange, St. Louis assumed more definitely the appearance of a town. The soldiers had, by degrees, become amalgamated with the inhabitants; comfortable dwellings were erected; and small fields in the neighborhood, now called *common fields*, had been opened and improved. The government was in a manner patriarchal; the whole community seemed to compose one family, under the guidance of a common father, and enjoying a common patrimony. Perhaps a sense of their weak and somewhat perilous situation, tended to bring into existence and strengthen the bonds of amity and good feeling, and to maintain that order, harmony, and subordination, which it is so difficult to maintain in infant colonies.

On the 11th of August, 1768, three years after St. Ange established himself at St. Louis, Mr. Rioux arrived with Spanish troops, and took possession of Upper Louisiana, in the name of his Catholic Majesty; but did not exercise any jurisdiction over the country, as appears from the fact that St. Ange continued to perform official acts until the beginning of 1770. (*Livre Terrien*.) From this it is to be inferred that the powers of Mr. Rioux were limited to the bare taking possession of the

country, and that no jurisdiction was to be exercised by him, until the dissatisfaction against the transfer had been worn away, and the inhabitants become reconciled to their new master. Their habits, manners, and customs, which they retained under the new government, and long after its extinction, being entirely French, they would naturally be averse to the change; and their remoteness from the source of power, imperatively required delicacy and prudence in such measures as might be adopted towards them.

The arrival of Count O'Reilly at New-Orleans, and the revolution that consequently occurred there, caused the evacuation of Upper Louisiana by the Spanish troops, and their departure for New-Orleans in July, 1769. The transfer having been completely effected, a new government organised, and a new code of laws established by Count O'Reilly, he directed his attention to the province of Upper Louisiana, of which, he appointed Pedro Peirnas Lieutenant Governor. This officer, under the Spanish government, was invested with extensive powers: he was military and civil commandant of the whole province over which he was delegated, having authority in whatever concerned the administration of justice, or the defence of the country; he appointed commandants of posts and towns within his jurisdiction, their acts being subject to his approval, and themselves removable at his pleasure; he had the power of making grants of land, which grants, or *concessions*, as they were called, were to be confirmed by the governor general; and with the exception that his acts could be revised and he removed by the power that appointed him, he was invested with despotic sway.

On the 29th of November, 1770, Mr. Peirnas arrived at St. Louis, with a body of troops, and took possession of Upper Louisiana again; but he did not begin to exercise his functions as Lieutenant Governor, until the month of February following. (*Livre Terrien.*) The inhabitants soon became reconciled to the new dominion, for Spain adopted the prudent plan of

tempering the mandates of government with parental mildness. Such measures, indeed, were necessary towards men who were placed on the verge of civilization, and with whom, harshness would have had no beneficial effect. It resulted in a firm attachment to the government, which displayed itself in their regret and dissatisfaction at the retrocession to France, in 1800.

The liberality observed in the policy of granting land gratuitously to settlers, adopted by the French, and pursued by the Spanish, attracted considerable numbers of emigrants, particularly from Canada, and the advantages of the fur trade, drew many from the lower to the upper province of Louisiana. The population thus acquired, soon formed settlements in different parts. As early as 1767, Mr. Delor de Tregette, founded *Vide Poche*, which in 1796, took the name of *Carondelet*, in honor of Baron de Carondelet, who was then Governor General of Louisiana. *Florissant* was founded by Mr. Borozier Dunégant, in 1769, and in 1796, was called St. Ferdinand, in honor of the king of Spain; and *Les Petites Côtes*, called *St. Charles*, in 1804, was established by Blanchette Chasseur, in 1769.

Mr. Peirnas was succeeded by Francisco Cruzat in 1775, and the latter, by Fernando de Leyba, in July, 1778.

Until the present time, although danger had been apprehended from the Indians, yet no injury had been experienced from them. The territory on which St. Louis stood, that on which several other towns had been located, and the surrounding country, were claimed by the Illinois Indians; (*dep. of A. Chouteau*)—but they had acquiesced in the intrusion of the whites, and had never disturbed them in the enjoyment of the land. A rumor, however, was now spread abroad, that an attack would shortly be made upon the town by the Canadians, and such Indians as were friendly to the English. The town was almost destitute of works of defence, but the inhabitants, amounting to little more than a hundred *men*, immediately proceeded to inclose it with a species of wall, formed of the

trunks of small trees, planted in the ground, the interstices being filled up with earth. The wall was some five or six feet high. It started from the *half moon*, a kind of fort in that form, situated on the river, near the present *upper ferry landing*, and ran from thence a little above the brow of the hill, in a semicircle, until it reached the Mississippi, somewhat above the *bridge*. Three gates were formed in it, one near the bridge, and two others on the hill, at the points where the roads from the north-western and south-western parts of the common field came in. At each of these gates was placed a piece of heavy ordnance, kept continually charged, and in good order. Having completed this work, and hearing no more of the Indians, it was supposed that the attack had been abandoned. Winter passed away, and spring came; still nothing was heard of the Indians. The inhabitants were led to believe that their apprehensions were groundless, from the representations of the Commandant Leyba, who did every thing in his power to dissipate their anxiety, assuring them that there was no danger, and that the rumor of the proposed attack was false. The month of May came, the labors of planting were over, and the peaceful and happy villagers gave themselves up to such pursuits and pleasures as suited their taste. An observer of the beautiful and quiet scene, which this country then presented, would never have dreamed that the angry passions of men were at work to mar it.

A few days before the attack, an old man named Kenelle [Quenelle], a resident of St. Louis, had gone over to the mouth of Kahokia creek to catch fish. While watching his lines on the south bank of the creek, he heard a slight noise on the opposite side. Looking up, he beheld an acquaintance, who had formerly resided in St. Louis, but who had absconded from thence, on account of some crime which he had committed. His name was Ducharme, and he was afterwards ascertained to be one of the leaders of the attack upon the town. His strange and sudden appearance, the circumstances

under which he had left St. Louis, and the rumor of the meditated attack—all these combined, induced Kenelle to refuse to cross the creek, at the invitation of Ducharme. He was confirmed in his refusal, by perceiving, a few moments after, the eyes of several Indians glaring upon him, from the bushes in which they were concealed. "Come over," said Ducharme, "I have something very particular to tell you." "No," said Kenelle, "your request is not intended for my benefit, or the gratification of your friendly feelings. Though I am old and bald, yet I value my scalp too highly to trust myself with you." So saying, he embarked in his canoe, and crossing over to St. Louis, informed the commandant of what he had seen. The people became alarmed, but the commandant, calling his informant an old dotard, ordered him to be put in prison. This proceeding had the effect of again calming their minds and banishing apprehension.

In the mean time, numerous bands of the Indians living on the lakes and the Mississippi—the Ojibeways, Menomonies, Winnebagoes, Sioux, Sacs, &c., together with a large number of Canadians, amounting, in all, to upwards of fourteen hundred, had assembled on the eastern shore of the Mississippi, a little above St. Louis, awaiting the 6th of May, the day fixed for the attack. The 5th of May was the feast of *Corpus Christi*, a day highly venerated by the inhabitants, who were all Catholics. Had the assault taken place then, it would have been fatal to them; for, after divine service, all, men, women, and children, had flocked to the prairie to gather strawberries, which were that season very abundant and fine. The town, being left perfectly unguarded, could have been taken with ease, and the suspecting inhabitants, who were roaming about in the search of fruit, have been massacred without resistance. Fortunately, however, a few only of the enemy had crossed the river and ambushed themselves in the prairie. The villagers frequently came so near them, in the course of the day, that the Indians, from their places of concealment, could have reached

them with their hands. But they knew not how many of the whites were still remaining in the town, and in the absence of their coadjutors, feared to attack, lest their pre-concerted plan might be defeated.

On the 6th, the main body of the Indians crossed, and marched directly towards the fields, expecting to find the greater part of the villagers there; but in this they were disappointed, a few only having gone out to view their crops. These perceived the approach of the savage foe, and immediately commenced a retreat towards the town, the most of them taking the road that led to the upper gate, nearly through the mass of Indians, and followed by a shower of bullets. The firing alarmed those who were in town, and the cry "to arms! to arms!" was heard in every direction. They rushed towards the works and threw open the gates to their brethren. The Indians advanced slowly, but steadily, towards the town, and the inhabitants, though almost deprived of hope, by the vast superiority in number of the assailants, determined to defend themselves to the last.

In expectation of an attack, Silvio Francisco Cartabona, a governmental officer, had gone to Ste. Genevieve for a company of militia to aid in defending the town, in case of necessity, and had, at the beginning of the month, returned with sixty men, who were quartered on the citizens. As soon as the attack commenced, however, neither Cartabona nor his men could be seen. Either through fear or treachery, they concealed themselves in a garret, and there remained until the Indians had retired. The assailed, being deprived of a considerable force by this shameful defection, were still resolute and determined. About fifteen men were posted at each gate; the rest were scattered along the line of defence, in the most advantageous manner.

When within a proper distance, the Indians began an irregular fire, which was answered with showers of grape shot from the artillery. The firing, for a while, was warm; but the

Indians, perceiving that all their efforts would be ineffectual, on account of the intrenchments, and deterred by the cannon, to which they were unaccustomed, from making a nearer approach, suffered their zeal to abate, and deliberately retired. At this stage of affairs, the Lieutenant Governor made his appearance. The first intimation that he received of what was going on, was by the discharge of artillery, on the part of the inhabitants. He immediately ordered several pieces of cannon, which were posted in front of the government house, to be spiked and filled with sand, and went, or rather was rolled in a wheelbarrow, to the scene of action. In a very peremptory tone, he commanded the inhabitants to cease firing and return to their houses. Those posted at the lower gate, did not receive the order, and consequently kept their stations. The commandant perceived this, and ordered a cannon to be fired at them. They had barely time to throw themselves on the ground, when the volley passed over them, and struck the wall, tearing a great part of it down. These proceedings, as well as the whole tenor of his conduct, since the first rumor of an attack, gave rise to suspicions very unfavorable to the Lieutenant Governor. It was bruited about, that he was the cause of the attack, that he was connected with the British, and that he had been bribed into a dereliction of duty, which, had not Providence averted, would have doomed them to destruction. Under the pretext of proving to them that there was no danger of an attack, he had, a few days before it occurred, sold to the traders all the ammunition belonging to the government; and they would have been left perfectly destitute and defenceless, had they not found in a private house, eight barrels of powder, belonging to a trader, which they seized in the name of the King, upon the first alarm. General George Rogers Clark, who was at this time in Kaskaskia, with a few men under his command, understanding that an attack was meditated on the town, offered all the assistance in his power, to aid in the defence. This offer was rejected by the Lieutenant Governor. All these

circumstances gave birth to a strong aversion to the commandant, which evinces itself, even at this day, in execrations of his character, whenever his name is mentioned to those who have known him. Representations of his conduct, together with a detailed account of the attack, were sent to New-Orleans by a special messenger, and the result was, that the Governor General appointed Mr. Francisco Cruzat, to the office of Lieutenant Governor.

As soon as it was ascertained that the Indians had retired from the neighborhood, the inhabitants proceeded to gather the dead, that lay scattered in all parts of the prairie. Seven were at first found, and buried in one grave. Ten or twelve others, in the course of a fortnight, were discovered in the long grass that bordered the marshes. The acts of the Indians were accompanied by their characteristic ferocity. Some of their victims were horribly mangled. With the exception of one individual, the whites who accompanied the Indians did not take part in the butcheries that were committed. A young man named *Calvé*, was found dead, his skull spit open, and a tomahawk, on the blade of which was written the word *Calvé*, sticking in his brain. He was supposed to have fallen by the hand of his uncle. Had those who discovered the Indians in the prairie, fled to the lower gate, they would have escaped; but the greater part of them took the road that led to the upper gate, through the very ranks of the enemy, and were thus exposed to the whole of their fire. About twenty persons, it is computed, met their death in endeavoring to get within the intrenchments. None of those within them were injured, and none of the Indians were killed, at least, none of them were found. Their object was not plunder, for they did not attempt, in their retreat, to take with them any of the cattle or horses that were in the prairie, and that they might have taken; nor did they attack any of the neighboring towns, where danger would have been less, and the prospect of success greater. The only object they had in view, was the destruction of St. Louis;

and this would seem to favor the idea that they were instigated by the English, and give good ground, when connected with other circumstances, to believe that Leyba was their aider and abettor. There are many anecdotes of this war, which tradition has preserved, and it may not be uninteresting to record a few of them.

A Mr. Chancellier had gone, on the day of the attack to the prairie, for strawberries, with his wife, two daughters, and an *American*, the first that had ever been in the country, in a cart drawn by two horses. When they perceived the Indians, they immediately fled towards the town in the cart; Mr. Chancellier being seated before, and the American behind, in order to protect the women, who were in the middle. In their flight, the American was mortally wounded. As he was about falling out, Mr. Chancellier seized him and threw him in the midst of the women, exclaiming, "they shan't get the scalp of my American." He was at the same time struck by two balls, which broke his arm in many places, above the elbow; his wife received a bullet through the middle of her hand, the elder daughter was shot through the shoulder, immediately above the breast, and the younger was struck on the forehead, but the ball glanced aside and merely stunned her. The moment Mr. Chancellier arrived at the gate, his horses dropped dead, pierced with a hundred wounds—but his family was saved.

Mr. Belhomme, in attempting to escape from the woods, where he had been hunting, into the town, had his thigh broken by a ball from an Indian. He managed to crawl to the great bend of the pond opposite the mill, and in the evening, when the Indians had disappeared, he began calling out for help. Finding this unavailing, he fired his gun, and continued firing until all his ammunition was expended. The people in the town heard the gun, but were afraid that the Indians were still lurking about, they dared not obey the signal of distress. The unfortunate man was found dead a few days after, having perished from loss of blood and hunger.

Mr. Julien Roy, being pursued by an Indian, who wished to take him prisoner, and finding that his enemy gained on him at every step, finally determined to give him battle. He turned around and taking deliberate aim, fired full at the savage's head. The Indian's jaw was shattered, and he fell. Mr. Roy ran up to him, and tearing his shirt, bound up the wound. The Indian was grateful, and guarded him through the ranks of his brethren to the town.

Many occurrences of like nature might be mentioned, tending to show that the ancient inhabitants of St. Louis, descended from the French, had, with the amenity and gayety of disposition, and courteousness of demeanor, which characterise them to this day, inherited a valor that was at the same time bold and magnanimous.

Thus ended an attack, which, properly conducted, might have been destructive to the infant town, and which, from the number of the enemy and the danger incurred, was calculated to impress itself deeply upon the minds of those who witnessed it. It forms an era in the history of the place; and the year in which it occurred, has ever since been designated by the inhabitants, as *the year of the great blow*. "*L'année du grand coup.*"

The Lieutenant Governor, aware of the representations against himself, and unable to bear the scorn and contempt which the inhabitants manifested towards him, died a few days after the attack, suspected by many of suicide by poison.

Mr. Cartabona, upon the death of Leyba, assumed and kept the command until the arrival of Mr. Cruzat, which was in the year following. During the administration of the latter, in the month of April, 1785, was witnessed the unparalleled rise of the river Mississippi, which also forms an era with the ancient inhabitants, and is called the *year of the great waters*. "*L'année des grandes Eaux.*" The Mississippi rose thirty feet above the highest water mark known; the town of Kaskaskia was nearly swept away; the low lands on the eastern shore

of the river, as far back as the bluff, were so completely overflowed, that men went through the woods to Kaskaskia in boats. Very little inconvenience, however, was felt; for the bottoms being thinly settled, the rise caused but little destruction of property.

Under this administration, too, were begun those fortifications, which, until a few years past, were in existence along the brow of the hill. They consisted of a square building, called the *bastion*, situated at the northern extremity of the hill, nearly opposite the *half moon*; of a circular fort, directly south of the bastion, and situated on what is now called *Olive street*; of another circular building, which served both for a fort and prison, south of that last mentioned, and situated on *Walnut street*; of a circular fort, in a line with and south of the others, situated at the extremity of the hill, near what is called *Mill Creek*; and, finally, of another circular fort, east of the latter, and somewhat above the bridge near the river. All of these fortifications were provided with ammunition and artillery, and soldiers were kept constantly on guard in them. The forts, besides, were connected together by a strong wall, made of cedar posts, planted upright in the ground, fitted closely together, and with loop holes for small arms between every two. These precautionary defences had been dictated by the danger which had been incurred, and which was fresh in the recollection of all, and probably had the effect of preventing any further assaults upon the place. The inhabitants were never after molested.

Up to this time, communication with New-Orleans was rare and difficult. The only mode of procuring merchandise for the fur trade, and supplies for the town, was by means of keel boats, which started early in the spring, and returned late in the fall. As many preparations were made for a trip to *the City*, as New-Orleans was called, *par excellence*, as now would be made for a voyage to the East Indies. Now, we have steam boats, which waft us down ten miles an hour, and bear us

back at the rate of seven. *Then*, the oar of the *voyageur* alone, moved the tardy bark against the rapid current, except occasionally, when the southern breeze would spring up, and, filling the sail, permit him to rest from his toil. Besides these natural difficulties, communication with New-Orleans, was at this time rendered dangerous, from the circumstance that a numerous band of robbers, under the guidance of two men, named Culbert and Magilbray [McGillivray] had located themselves at a place called *Cotton-wood Creek*, “*La riviere aux Liards*,” and began a system of depredation which was highly alarming and detrimental to those who navigated the Mississippi. As communication between the two ports could be effected but once a year, the boats were generally richly laden, so that the plunder of them was wealth to the plunderers, and ruin to the owners. The gay song of the *voyageur*, as he kept time with the stroke of his oar, was the signal for the robbers to rush them from their retreat. Armed at all points, they seized upon the vessels, and compelled the astonished and terrified crews to run them to the shore. There they would divest them of all that was valuable, and then leave them at liberty, either to continue their route, or return to their place of departure. This system of pillage was carried on with success; for it was rare that a boat passed these robbers unseen, and seldom did they see one which they did not pillage.

In the spring of 1787, a barge belonging to Mr. Beausoliel, had started from New-Orleans, richly laden with merchandise, for St. Louis. As she approached the Cotton-wood creek, a breeze sprung up and bore her swiftly by. This the robbers perceived, and immediately despatched a company of men up the river for the purpose of heading. The manoeuvre was effected in the course of two days, at an island, which has since been called Beausoliel’s Island. The barge had just put ashore—the robbers boarded, and ordered the crew to return down. The men were disarmed, guards were stationed in every part of the vessel, and she was soon under way. Mr. Beausoliel gave

himself up to despair. He had spent all he possessed in the purchase of the barge and its cargo, and now that he was to be deprived of them all, he was in agony. This vessel would have shared the fate of many others that had preceded it, but for the heroic daring of a negro, who was one of the crew. Cacasotte, the negro, was a man rather under the ordinary height, very slender in person, but of uncommon strength and activity. The color of his skin and the curl of his hair, alone told that he was a negro, for the peculiar characteristics of his race, had given place in him, to what might be termed beauty. His forehead was finely moulded, his eyes small and sparkling as those of a serpent, his nose aquiline, his lips of a proper thickness; in fact, the whole appearance of the man, joined to his known character for shrewdness and courage, seemed to indicate, that under better circumstances, he might have shone conspicuous in the history of nations. Cacasotte, as soon as the robbers had taken possession of the barge, began to make every demonstration of uncontrollable joy. He danced, sang, laughed, and soon induced his captors to believe that they had liberated him from irksome slavery, and that his actions were the ebullitions of pleasure. His constant attention to their smallest wants and wishes, too, won their confidence, and whilst they kept a watchful eye on the other prisoners, they permitted him to roam through the vessel unmolested and unwatched. This was the state of things that the negro desired: he seized the first opportunity to speak to Mr. Beausoliel, and beg permission to rid him of the dangerous intruders. He laid his plan before his master, who, after a great deal of hesitation, acceded to it. Cacasotte then spoke to two of the crew, likewise negroes, and engaged them in the conspiracy. Cacasotte was cook, and it was agreed between him and his fellow conspirators, that the signal for dinner should be the signal for action. The hour of dinner at length arrived. The robbers assembled in considerable numbers on the deck, and stationed themselves at the bow and stern, and along the sides,

to prevent any rising of the men. Cacasotte went among them with the most unconcerned look and demeanor imaginable. As soon as he perceived that his comrades had taken the stations he had assigned them, he took his position at the bow of the boat, near one of the robbers, a stout, herculean man, who was armed cap-a-pie. Every thing being arranged to his satisfaction, Cacasotte gave the preconcerted signal, and immediately the robber near him was struggling in the waters. With the speed of lightning, he went from one robber to another, and in less than three minutes, he had thrown fourteen of them overboard. Then seizing an oar, he struck on the head those who attempted to save themselves by grappling the running boards, then shot with the muskets that had been dropped on deck, those who swam away. In the mean time, the other conspirators were not idle, but did almost as much execution as their leader. The deck was soon cleared, and the robbers that remained below, were too few in number to offer any resistance.

Having got rid of his troublesome visitors, Mr. Beausoliel deemed it prudent to return to New-Orleans. This he accordingly did, taking care when he arrived near the Cotton-wood creek, to keep the opposite side of the river. He reached New-Orleans, and gave an account of his capture and liberation to the Governor, who thereupon issued an order that the boats bound for St. Louis in the following spring, should all go in company, to afford mutual assistance in case of necessity. Spring came, and ten keel boats, each provided with swivels, and their respective crews well armed, took their departure from New-Orleans, determined, if possible, to destroy the nest of robbers. When they neared the Cotton-wood creek, the foremost boat perceived several men, near the mouth, among the trees. The anchor was dropped, and she waited until the other boats should come up. In a few moments, they appeared and a consultation was held, in which it was determined that a sufficient number of men should remain on board, whilst

the others should proceed on shore to attack the robbers. The boats were rowed to shore in a line, and those appointed for that purpose, landed and began to search the island in quest of the robbers, but in vain! They had disappeared. Three or four flat boats were found in a bend of the creek, laden with all kinds of valuable merchandise—the fruits of their depredations. A long low hut was discovered—the dwelling of the robbers—in which were stored away numerous cases of guns, destined for the fur trade, ammunition and provisions of all kinds. The greater part of these things were put on board the boats, and restored to their respective owners at St. Louis.

This proceeding had the effect of dispersing the robbers, for they were never after heard of. The arrival of ten barges together at St. Louis, was an unusual spectacle, and the year 1788, has ever since been called the *year of the ten boats*.

*Sketch of the
Early History
of St. Louis*

by

J. N. Nicollet

Joseph N. Nicollet (1790-1843), French mathematician and astronomer, came to America in 1832 to make a "scientific tour." After six years of explorations in the south and west, he was requested by Colonel J. J. Abert, Chief of the Topographical Bureau, to "collect additional materials for the map now in hand, of those parts of the United States, and their territories, which lie west of the Mississippi." The experiences of these years were embodied in his posthumous Report Intended to Illustrate a Map of the Hydrographic Basin of the Upper Mississippi River, which was published in 1843 as Senate Document 237, 26th Congress, 2nd Session (and in 1845 as House Document 52, 28th Congress, 2nd Session.)

Nicollet had had in mind a very comprehensive work on the western United States and collected a great variety of manuscripts concerned with the description of the West and the history of the fur trade. Among others, he borrowed from Henry Chouteau (whom he had first met in Washington and later visited in St. Louis) certain papers from the estate of the late Colonel Chouteau. From these he wrote a "Sketch of the Early History of St. Louis." At the time of his death he had not indicated what place he wished this article to have in relation to the Report; on publication it was placed between the two sections of that document (pp. 75-92). Although Julius T. Ducatel and John H. Alexander were cited as translators of Parts I and II, the translator of the "Sketch" was not named. The original French version of the "Sketch" (now in the Nicollet MSS. of the Library of Congress) is clearly a first rough draft which underwent considerable re-writing and rearrangement before resulting in the form published. Nicollet's account was reprinted (but not perfectly) in Skillman's The Western Metropolis of St. Louis in 1846 (St. Louis, 1846), pp. 60-78. It is reproduced here from the Senate Document.

Sketch of the Early History of St. Louis

If I may be permitted to speak of the city of St. Louis as of an impersonated existence, I would say that she was born French; but, put under the charge of a step-mother, her cradle was hung up in the forest, her infancy stunted by its unavoidable privations, and her maturity retarded by the terror of the Indian yell. Her youth was more calm, but still not prosperous; for the exercise of undue constraints in youth sickens and retards the development of manhood. Abandoned subsequently by her Castillian guardians, she found herself reclaimed by her old parent, only to be once more repudiated. She had then, however, attained her majority, and had herself become a parent; whose children, born under the aegis of Liberty, opened for her a new destiny, and vowed that she should become the metropolis of a new empire.

In 1762, Mr. d'Abadie, then director general as well as civil and military commander of Louisiana, granted to a company of merchants of New Orleans the exclusive privilege of the fur-trade with the Indian nations of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. This company bore the title of the firm of Pierre Liguette Laclede, Antoine Maxan, & Co. Thus commissioned, the company lost no time in fitting out an expedition, well supplied with all the necessary articles for Indian trade, and which were to aid in forming new and permanent establishments on both rivers.

Mr. Laclede, the principal projector of the company, and withal a man of great intelligence and enterprise, was placed in charge of the expedition. Leaving New Orleans on the 3d

of August 1763, he arrived at St. Genevieve three months afterwards—namely, on the 3d of November.

At this period the French colony, established sixty years before in the Illinois, was in a prosperous condition. It had increased in importance since the year 1732, at which time France was beginning to realize the great idea, so long conceived, of uniting Canada to Louisiana by an extensive line of military posts, to be supported by several principal forts, the strategic positions of which were admirably selected. Fort Chartres, built on the flat now known by the name of the *American bottom*, was one of these main fortified places. But when Mr. Laclède arrived in the country, Louis XV had already signed the everlastingly shameful treaty of peace, by which was most inconsiderately ceded to Great Britain one of the finest regions on the habitable globe, the possession of which had been obtained after nearly a century of efforts and discoveries, and at the sacrifice of much blood and money. This region of country, embracing what are now the two Canadas, the immense watery expanse of the Northern lakes, and the rich domains of Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, and of East Louisiana, to the Gulf of Mexico, passed under the dominion of Great Britain.

The Mississippi river thus became the natural limit between the French and British possessions, with its navigation declared free to the two nations. At this time, the French establishments were on the east side of the Mississippi, particularly those made in Illinois. The small village of St. Genevieve alone was on the right side, in which Mr. Laclède could scarcely find a house of sufficient size to store a fourth part of his cargo. On the other hand the director general of Louisiana had received orders to deliver up the territory on the left side of the river; so that the British authorities might be expected at any moment, presenting themselves to take possession of it. In the midst of these difficulties, Mr. Laclède, greatly embarrassed under the new aspect of things, found himself,

however, relieved when the commanding officer, Mr. Neyon de Villiers, allowed him the use of the stores at Fort Chartres, until the final surrender of the place. Laclede gladly accepted the offer, and lost no time in apportioning his squad and distributing his flotilla along the rivers, so as to render them most effective either for defence or for trade.

Having accomplished that preliminary arrangement, it became necessary to look out for the position of a central establishment. The left bank of the river no longer presented any fit situation, since the whole territory of Illinois had been passed over to the British Government; the village of St. Genevieve, on the right bank, being his only alternative, and this situated at too great a distance from the mouth of the Missouri. Mr. Laclede, therefore, left Fort Chartres, on a voyage of exploration to the junction of this river with the Mississippi, and was not long before he discovered that the bluff upon which St. Louis now stands was the spot that would best answer the purposes of the company.

Deferring, for the present, a more particular account of the geological situation of St. Louis, it may be remarked in this place that the hill upon which the city is situated is composed of limestone rocks, covered by a deep deposit of alluvial soil of great fertility. The limestone bluff rises to an elevation of about 80 feet over the usual recession of the waters of the Mississippi, and is crowned by an upland, or plateau, extending to the north and west, and presenting scarcely any limit to the foundation of a city entirely secure from the invasions of the river. At the time referred to, this plateau presented the aspect of a beautiful prairie, but already giving the promise of a renewed luxuriant vegetation, in consequence of the dispersion of the larger animals of chase, and the annual fires being kept out of the country, since the arrival of the whites on the Illinois side. At present, this new growth is again doomed to destruction; but the process is carried on with more discernment, and for a more praiseworthy object; it is

for the extension of the city, for the erection of manufactories; for clearing arable lands—in short, for all the purposes of a progressive state of civilization.

Still, to be more particular in the description of this location, the slope of the hills on the river-side was covered by a growth of heavy timber, overshadowing an almost evergreen sward, free from undergrowth, and which terminated gently in a point on the very margin of the river, at a place corresponding to the spot where the old market-house now stands. The Mississippi was very deep, but a great deal narrower than it is now, as it is stated by the old inhabitants that persons could converse with each other across it, without effort. It was on this spot that the prescient mind of Mr. Laclède foresaw and predicted the future importance of the town to which he gave the name of St. Louis, and about which he discoursed, a few days afterward, with so much enthusiasm, in presence of the officers at Fort Chartres. But winter had now set in, (December,) and the Mississippi was about to be closed by ice. Mr. Laclède could do no more than cut down some trees, and *blaze* others, to indicate the place which he had selected. Returning afterwards to the fort, where he spent the winter, he occupied himself in making every preparation for the establishment of the new colony.

Accordingly, at the breaking up of winter, he equipped a large boat, which he manned with thirty hands. It is proper to mention, in this place, that Mr. Laclède was accompanied by two young creoles of New Orleans, Auguste and Pierre Chouteau, of high intelligence, in whom he reposed the greatest confidence, and from whom he derived much assistance. These two young men, who never afterwards quitted the country of their adoption, became, in time, the heads of numerous families; enjoying the highest respectability, the comforts of an honorably acquired affluence, the fruit of their own industry, and possessed of a name which to this day, after a lapse of seventy years, is still a passport that commands safety and

hospitality among all the Indian nations of the United States, north and west. Mr. Laclede gave the command of his boat to Auguste, the elder of the two brothers, who died in 1826 [*sic*]; and it is with mixed feelings of veneration and filial affection that, at the moment of recording these events (1842,) I have the satisfaction of believing that my respectable and esteemed friend, Pierre Chouteau, is still alive, in the full enjoyment of his faculties, at the ripe old age of 86 years.

Auguste Chouteau, who had accompanied Mr. Laclede in his first excursion, was directed to carry out his plans; and on the 15th of February, 1764, had arrived at his point of destination, with all his men, whom he immediately set to work. The present old market-place of St. Louis is the spot where the first tents and log-cabins were pitched, upon the site of this now important city of the West. Mr. Laclede being detained at Fort Chartres in the settlement of his private affairs, and in anticipation of the arrival of the British troops, thought it necessary, however, to pay a visit, early in the ensuing month of April, to his *pioneers*; and, finding everything in good train, contented himself with leaving such instructions as were best fitted to develop the resources of the location, and returned to Fort Chartres, with the intention of removing thence the goods belonging to the company-

I feel loth to describe here the dreadful effect produced upon the French colony of Illinois by the treaty of peace of 1763, referred to above; yet it seems to have caused still more dissatisfaction among the Indian tribes of the North, who for a long time refused to abide by it. In truth, the colony expired of a natural death. Several of the poorer inhabitants of the villages of Fort Chartres, Kaskaskia, Cahokia, and Vincennes on the Wabash, yielded to the new domination; whilst others preferred to follow up the fortunes of Mr. de Neyon, and accompany him to New Orleans. Others, again, crossed the Mississippi, adding their strength to the nascent colony of St. Louis.

But, on the 10th of October of the same year, (1764,) an incident occurred, which threw the colony into great alarm. The remnants of the Missouri tribe of Indians, who occupied an extensive prairie upon the left bank of the river of the same name, suddenly made their appearance before St. Louis, numbering in all more than four hundred individuals, men, women, and children, and counting over one hundred warriors. Although they did not present themselves in hostile array, still they became troublesome by their importunate demands for provisions, and their more vexatious pilferings. Unable to foresee what would be the result of this unexpected visit, the colonists of Illinois, who, abandoning the British dominion, had flocked to join those of St. Louis, took the alarm, and recrossed the Mississippi. Auguste Chouteau thus found himself reduced to his original company of thirty to thirty-five men, from whom he despatched a messenger to Mr. Laclède, who was still tarrying at Fort Chartres. Laclède arrived; and the result of his negotiation with the Indians proves that he had a great knowledge of the Indian character, and possessed much tact in managing it.

The chiefs, having appeared before him, addressed him in these terms: "We are worthy of pity; for we are like the ducks and geese, seeking some clear water upon which to rest themselves, and to obtain an easy existence. We know of no better place than where we are. We mean to build our wigwams around your village. We shall be your children, and you will be our father." Laclède here closed the talk, promising them a reply at a meeting to take place the next day; on which occasion he addressed them thus: "You told me yesterday that you were like the ducks and geese, who go on travelling until they find a fine country, where they can rest themselves and obtain an easy living. You told me that you were worthy of pity; and you were looking out for a spot to settle upon, and had not found one more suitable than this; that you would build your village around me; that we should live all together

like friends. I wish to answer you like a good father; and I must say that, if you imitate the ducks and geese, you follow guides that have no forethought; for if they had any, they would not settle on clear water, where they can be seen by the eagle, who would catch them. This would not be the case were they to select a retired spot, well shaded by trees. You, Missourias, you would not be devoured by birds of prey, but by the red men, who have been so long warring against you, and have already so much reduced your numbers. They are at this moment not far from here, watching the English, to prevent them from taking possession of their grounds. If they discover that you are here, they will kill your warriors, and will make slaves of your wives and children. This is what will happen to you, if, as you say, you mean to follow the example of ducks and geese, instead of listening to the counsels of men who reflect. You, chiefs and warriors, think now, whether it is not more prudent that you leave here quickly, rather than be crushed by the superior number of your enemies, in sight of your butchered old men, and your women and children torn to pieces, and their limbs scattered to the dogs and vultures. Recollect that it is a good father who speaks to you. Meditate well what he has said, and come back to-night with your answer."

Accordingly, towards evening, the whole nation, in mass, presented itself, announcing that it had determined to follow his advice; yet, as customary, asked him to take pity upon their women and children, soliciting provisions for them, and powder and shot for the warriors. Mr. Laclede acceded liberally to their prayer, and the day following the next the unfortunate remnants of the Missouri nation ascended the river of their fathers, and returned to their village.

All anxieties being now dissipated, the colonists of Illinois, recovered from their alarm, returned to add numbers to the new colony. Lands were allotted to them, which they set about tilling, and upon which they built their cabins.

There being, so far, no indications of the arrival of the British, Mr. Laclede had deferred the translation of his establishment from Fort Chartres to St. Louis. He, in consequence, returned to the fort, as much for the sake of superintending his commercial affairs, as with the expectation of increasing the number of inhabitants for his new colony. In this expectation he had been encouraged by circumstances that had occurred during the summer, in consequence of the treaty.

It may be proper to state here, that when Mr. Neyon de Villiers received orders to evacuate the possession of the left bank of the Mississippi, he had under his command the troops at Fort Peoria, on the Illinois river; those of Fort Marsiac, (not Massac, nor Massacre,) on the Ohio; and those stationed at the post of Vincennes, on the Wabash; although the last being thus disposed of, Mr. de Neyon left Mr. S. Ange de Bellerive. It would seem that, at this time, there were no garrisons at Kaskaskia, Cahokia, and the Prairie du Rocher; these three villages being supposed sufficiently protected by Fort Chartres. Mr. de Neyon ordered all these posts to be evacuated, with the view of concentrating their garrisons about himself. There was, besides, a fort situated on the Kanzas river, about four hundred miles above the mouth of the Missouri; and another had been commenced on the Osage river, near the old village of the same name. These two positions were not included in the treaty, as being situated on the west side of the Mississippi; nevertheless, orders were also sent to their garrisons to come down to Fort Chartres. All things being thus disposed of, Mr. de Neyon left Mr. St. Ange de Bellerive, one captain, two lieutenants, and forty men, to guard the fort until the time of its surrender. On the 10th of July, 1764, he descended the Mississippi with his own troops, some civil officers, and a large number of the inhabitants of the village of Fort Chartres and of the Prairie du Rocher. These people had been prevailed upon to follow Mr. de Neyon by a promise to obtain for them, at New Orleans, a grant of

lands in Lower Louisiana, where they would be under a more immediate French government, and at a distance from their enemies, the English, who were termed by them "the heretics," &c. This national feeling was perhaps laudable, and he, no doubt, would have been welcomed at New Orleans; but it so happened that, upon the arrival of the convoy, a sad and fatal rumor was circulated, that the rest of both Upper and Lower Louisiana, west of the Mississippi, was about to be transferred to the Spanish Government. Besides, the local French Government interested itself very little about Mr. de Neyon, and those unfortunate families who had abandoned their homes and valuable lands under a delusive expectation of bettering their condition. After remaining a long time unsettled at New Orleans, their means nearly exhausted, some retired to the Opelousas and the Attakapas, whilst others reascended the Mississippi, on their return to Illinois and St. Louis. Then it was that Mr. de Neyon was censured. It was pretended that he had been actuated by motives of ambition, and the desire of giving himself importance on his arrival at New Orleans, by exhibiting in the persons of his deluded followers the deep regret which his departure had occasioned in the bosoms of the inhabitants of Illinois, in the hope of thereby rising to some elevated function.

This appears to have been the opinion of Mr. Laclede, who had always endeavored to retain these families, by the offer of certain and immediate advantages, as a set-off against promises the fulfilment of which depended upon a thousand contingencies. On this subject he explained himself to Mr. de Neyon in no measured terms. But the influence of the latter prevailed. This did not prevent the high-minded Mr. Laclede from acting as the friend and benefactor of those whom misfortunes drove back to seek his protection. He distributed among them lands and provisions, aided them with laborers, and furnished them the means of transporting, by land and by water, whatever they had preserved or had previ-

ously abandoned in their first removal. Thus the colony of St. Louis received the accession of all those that emigrated from the left side of the Mississippi. The village of Fort Chartres was completely deserted, there remaining only the small garrison of the fort. The inhabitants destroyed their houses; not, however, in a feeling of spite, but to avail themselves of whatever could be transported and appropriated to their new establishments.

In the meanwhile, the second year after the signature of the treaty of peace had elapsed, and the British had not yet been able to take possession of Illinois. This was owing to the opposition made by several Indian tribes, who, as alluded to above, had refused to abide by the treaty, and were waging a most cruel war against the British. These tribes had formed a confederacy, under the command of Pontiac, a bold warrior, who had already become celebrated for his prowess, and his devoted attachment to France during the whole of the war which the latter had carried on against Great Britain, in America. The confederated Indian army was composed of Hurons, Miamis, Chippeways, Ottowas, Pottawatomies, Missouriias, &c., &c. The name of Pontiac was the terror of the whole region of the lakes; and by his bands, he effectually interrupted the British intercourse with the rest of the nations that had remained friendly to that Government. The taking of Fort Michilimackinac, the attempt at Detroit, and the attack upon the schooner Gladwin, on Lake Michigan, are memorable events, evincing a spirit of cunning and daring highly characteristic of the genius of the red man.

In the winter of 1764-'65, Pontiac, whilst engaged in his acts of depredation, learned that an armed British force was about to start from New Orleans, to take possession of the left bank of the Mississippi. He immediately proceeded to the neighborhood of Fort Chartres, accompanied by 400 warriors, to oppose this occupation of the country; and, finding there some Illinois Indians, who had placed themselves under the

protection of the French garrison, he proposed to them to join him. But these people, disheartened by recent calamities, and, as it were, foredoomed to a final extinction, were unwilling to assume a hostile attitude towards their new rulers, from whom interest, if not generosity, would lead them to expect the same protection which they were then receiving. To this refusal Pontiac replied, with characteristic energy: "Hesitate not, or I destroy you with the same rapidity that fire destroys the grass of the prairie. Listen, and recollect that these are Pontiac's words." Having then despatched scouts upon the Mississippi and the Ohio, he hastened with some of his warriors to Fort Chartres, where he addressed Mr. St. Ange de Bellerive in the following terms:

"Father, we have long wished to see thee, to shake hands with thee, and, whilst smoking the calumet of peace, to recall the battles in which we fought together against the misguided Indians and the English dogs. I love the French, and I have come here with my warriors to avenge their wrongs," &c., &c. Mr. de St. Ange was a Canadian officer of great bravery, and too much honor to be seduced by this language. Besides, he knew too well the Indian character, to lose sight of the fact that the love of plunder was probably, at bottom, a stronger inducement for Pontiac than his love for the French. This visit, which was terminated by an exchange of civilities, might, nevertheless, have brought difficulties upon the small garrison of Fort Chartres. But news arrived that the Indians of Lower Louisiana had attacked the British expedition, some miles below Natchez, and repulsed it. Pontiac became then less active in guarding the rivers; and, as he believed that the occupation of the country had been retarded again, he and his party were about to retire altogether. During the time, however, that the news took to arrive, the British had succeeded in getting up another expedition, on the Ohio; and Captain Sterling, at the head of a company of Scots, arrived unexpectedly in the summer of 1765; taking possession of the fort

before the Indians had time to offer any resistance. At this news, Pontiac raved; swearing that before he left the country, he would retake the fort and bear away Captain Sterling's scalp. But the intervention of Mr. St. Ange and Mr. Laclede put an end to these savage threats. Pontiac returned to the north, made peace with the British, from whom he received a pension, and seemed to have buried all animosity against them. But, by his restless spirit, he soon aroused new suspicions; and we are informed by Captain Jonathan Carver, that Pontiac having gone, in the year 1767, to hold a council in the Illinois country, an Indian, who was either commissioned by one of the English governors, or instigated by the love he bore the English nation, attended him as a spy; and being convinced, from the speech Pontiac made in the council, that he still retained his former prejudice against those for whom he now professed friendship, he plunged his knife into his heart as soon as he had done speaking, and laid him dead on the spot.

Captain Carver travelled through the northern region, but never was south of the Prairie du Chien; so that his information is probably incorrect. The celebrity of Pontiac, as well as the distinguished part he took in the Indian wars of the West, will justify me, therefore, for introducing here a somewhat different statement of the manner of his death, as I have it from two of the most respectable living authorities of the day—Col. Pierre Chouteau, of St. Louis, and Col. Pierre Menard, of Kaskaskia. It is as follows: Pontiac's last residence was in St. Louis. One day he came to Mr. de St. Ange, and told him that he was going to pay a visit to the Kaskaskia Indians. Mr. de St. Ange endeavored to dissuade him from it, reminding him of the little friendship that existed between him and the British. Pontiac's answer was: "Captain, I am a man! I know how to fight. I have always fought openly. They will not murder me; and if any one attacks me as a brave man, I am his match." He went off; was feasted; got drunk;

and retired into the wood, to sing his medicine songs. In the mean while, an English merchant, named Williamson, bribed a Kaskaskia Indian with a barrel of rum, and the promise of a greater reward if he could succeed in killing Pontiac. He was struck with a pakamagon, (tomahawk,) and his skull fractured, which caused his death. This murder, which roused the vengeance of all the Indian tribes friendly to Pontiac, brought about the successive wars and almost total extermination of the Illinois nation.

Pontiac was a remarkably well-looking man; nice in his person, and full of taste in his dress, and in the arrangement of his exterior ornaments. His complexion is said to have approached that of the whites. His origin is still uncertain; for some have supposed him to belong to the tribe of Ottowas, others to the Miamis, &c.; but Col. P. Chouteau, senior, who knew him well, is of the opinion that he was a Nipissing.

At last, on the 17th of July, 1765, Mr. de St. Ange de Belle-rive surrendered the country, and passed over to St. Louis, with his troops and the civil officers. This arrival was a favorable event for the organization of the colony. St. Louis became the capital of Upper Louisiana, under the command of Mr. de St. Ange, who had charge of the execution of the laws and ordinances by which the French possessions were governed.

But Louis XV, in 1763, had entered into another treaty, by which he ceded to Spain the rest of his possessions in North America. This treaty, which filled the measure of French losses and humiliations, had been kept secret for a year. The official news of it was only received at New Orleans on the 21st of April, 1764, and rumors of it soon reached Upper Louisiana. Such was the consternation with which it was received by the whole French population, that the grief it occasioned to Governor D'Abadie became the cause of his death, and Aubri, his successor, had to announce the cession to the people. The serious troubles which, in consequence of this cession, were brought on at New Orleans under the Spanish captain general,

Don Antonio d'Ulloa, and the tragic events which followed under his successor, the blood-thirsty General Oreiley, kept the administration of Upper Louisiana in the hands of the French for several years. It was not until the 11th of August, 1768, that Spanish troops could take a first possession of St. Louis. But, eleven months afterwards, in consequence of events alluded to, the same troops had been compelled to evacuate the country. At last, quiet being restored in Lower Louisiana, the Spaniards, in 1770, returned and took definitive possession of St. Louis. Mr. de St. Ange was then an old man. He decided upon remaining in St. Louis, where he died in 1775 at the age of 76. He had long commanded the post of Vincennes on the Wabash before he was called to take charge of Fort Chartres; and, being highly respected and beloved by the inhabitants, his death was deeply regretted.

When Mr. Laclede arrived in the country, there were no Indians on the spot where St. Louis now stands, nor in the whole region between the Mississippi and what is now the southern part of the State of Missouri. The Illinois Indians never crossed the river; so that the new colonists were never visited but by the Missouri and Osage Indians, and always as friends. The Missourians had become familiar, and had got the habit of spending their summers with the French. They came down in their canoes, bringing along with them their wigwams, and located themselves near St. Louis; their women aiding the colonists in their rural occupations, and in building their houses. The Osages visited the place three or four times a year, but not in a body. After a while, all the other northeastern nations adopted the same custom; and even the Sacs and Foxes, after the destruction of the Illinois nation, having driven away the Peorias, who were the last remnants of this nation, came in to trade away their maple-sugar, their pecans, &c.

The Peorias, after having been expelled from their village on the Illinois river, took refuge at Kaskaskia. Afterwards, they fled below St. Louis, on the spot where the arsenal is now

located; and, the British no longer occupying Fort Chartres, although the country still belonged to them they again took refuge there, and, under the American Government their hunting-grounds were in the vicinity of St. Genevieve. It was, however, on the prairies of Kaskaskia that they were finally destroyed by their enemies, and by the use of ardent spirits. The last attack upon them by the Sacs and Foxes, and other allied tribes, must have taken place between 1800 and 1804.

Had St. Louis been destined to remain a village, her history might have been despatched in a few lines. But future generations will inquire of us all that concerns the origin of the "River Queen," the destined queen of the western empire. Having so far sketched its early history, it becomes necessary to record the principal events connected with the city and its vicinity.

In 1767, a man by the name of Delor Détergette settled upon a splendid amphitheatre on the right bank of the Mississippi, six miles south of St. Louis. He was soon followed by others; but, as they were not overburdened with wealth, they used to pay frequent visits to their kinsfolk of St. Louis, who, on seeing them approach, would exclaim, "Here come the empty pockets"—"*voilà les poches vides qui viennent.*" But, on some occasion, a wag remarked, "You had better call them *emptiers of pockets*,"—*les vide-poches*; a compliment which was retaliated by these upon the place of St. Louis, which was subject to frequent seasons of want, by styling it *Pain-court*—short of bread. The village, being still nameless, retained the appellation of *Vide-poche* until 1776 [*sic*], when it was changed into that of Carondelet.

In 1769, settlements were made on both shores of the lower portion of the Missouri river. Blanchette, surnamed "the hunter," built his log-house on the hills called *les Petites Côtes*; being the first dwelling of the beautiful village that, in 1784, received the name of *St. Charles*.

François Borosier Dunegan commenced the village of *Floris*-

sant; which name it still popularly retains, although more lately called by the Spaniards St. Ferdinand.

About the same time, François Saucier originated the establishment of the *Portage des Sioux*, on the bank of the Mississippi, seven miles above the mouth of the Missouri.

In 1778, on the 20th of June, Pierre Liguette Laclede, the founder of St. Louis, died in the village called the *Poste des Arkansas* on Arkansas river. Mr. Laclede had continued to reside in St. Louis. His house, situated in what is now Main street, between Market and Walnut streets, and opposite the old market, became, after his death the property of the late Col. A. Chouteau, who enlarged it, adorned the premises with a fine garden, and created that splendid mansion lately admired by strangers as well as by the inhabitants of the city. It was pulled down in the month of October, 1841; and might be regretted, did it not make room for more modern buildings, better suited to the commercial extension of the place. Laclede still continued to deal in furs, which traffic obliged him to make frequent voyages to New Orleans. It was during one of these voyages, whilst ascending the Mississippi, that he became so ill as to be stopped at the Post of Arkansas, where he died, at the age of 54. He had never been married; and not having had time to realize the fortune which his enterprize and intelligence could not have failed to secure to him, his property was sold after his death, in liquidation of his affairs.

In 1780, on the 6th [*sic*] of May, as I discover by the papers of the late Col. Auguste Chouteau, intrusted to me by the family, (though some writers assign the year 1778,) St. Louis was attacked by a party of Indians and British, who had been ordered to take possession of the town on the west side of the Mississippi, in consequence of the part which Spain had taken in favor of the independence of the United States. The French, who had preserved a good understanding with all the Indian nations, very little expected this blow, and were not prepared to resist it. The garrison consisted of only 50 to 60 men,

commanded by a certain Captain Lebas, (a Spaniard, and not a Frenchman, as his name might lead one to suppose.) But, whatsoever his origin, he deserves nothing but public contempt. This Lebas, during the first three years that the Spaniards occupied the country, had commanded a small fort somewhere towards the mouth of the Missouri—perhaps at *Belle Fontaine*—and afterwards received the command of St. Louis, as a successor to Cruzat, who himself had succeeded Piernaz. The only means of defence for the place, at that time, was a stone tower erected near the village on the bank of the Mississippi, and some weak palisades. There were not more than 150 males in the place, of whom not more than 70 could be relied upon as efficient to repel an enemy numbering, according to the best authorities, 900 combatants; though, by some, their number is represented to have been from 1,400 to 1,500. It would have been useless to propose a capitulation, the conditions of which the Indians, (as has been unfortunately too often experienced,) either from ignorance or treachery, never fulfil; and the inhabitants knew too well the character of those with whom they had to deal, to expect salvation in anything but a courageous resistance. The women and children, who could not take part in the defence, took shelter in the house of Auguste Chouteau; whilst all those, both men and women, who were within the palisades, commenced so vigorous a resistance, that the enemy was forced to retreat. But these, with characteristic ferocity, threw themselves upon those of the inhabitants who, engaged in the cultivation of their fields, had not had time to reach the palisades; and it is said that 60 were killed, and 13 made prisoners.

It is averred that the Spanish garrison took no part in this gallant defence. Lebas and his men had betaken themselves to the stone tower; and it is further stated, that, as the tower threatened to give way after the first fire from it, he ordered the firing to be stopped; and that he died on receiving information that the Sacs, Foxes, and Iowa Indians were massacring the

people on the plains. The year this attack took place, is called by the French *l'Année de Grand Coup*—the year of the great blow.

Historical accuracy demands a denial here of the assertion of some authors, who ascribe to American troops an active part in this defence. Unfortunately, there were no United States troops on the bank of the Mississippi opposite to St. Louis, as none were needed, there being nothing to guard or to defend. It is well known that General George R. Clark, with his men, then occupied the important post of Kaskaskia, which is more than 56 miles S.E. of St. Louis; and that, consequently, this gallant officer could not have had time, even if it fell within his line of duty, to aid in an affair that concerned the Spaniards and the British, which was planned as a surprise, and lasted but a few hours.

It was probably on this occasion, or perhaps on a similar one, that took place in the summer of 1811, as tradition informs us, that, after the battle, the Indians being reproached by the French that their women had been indiscriminately murdered by them, replied: "But why did they not wear their blue kerchiefs about their heads, as they used to do formerly? We would have recognized and spared them."

After the event narrated above, the inhabitants of St. Louis, finding that their garrison were unworthy of trust, without ammunition, and without means of defence against a regularly-organized attack, deputed Mr. A. Chouteau to proceed to New Orleans for assistance. Cruzat was again made commander of St. Louis, the affairs of which place he administered with mildness and public satisfaction. A wooden fort was built on the most elevated spot within the city, upon which were mounted several heavy pieces of ordnance; and still later there were added four stone turrets, from which cross-fires could be kept up. This might have answered for the protection of the city, but only against the Indians. No traces of this

fortification are now to be seen—the very site of which has yielded to the improvements of the city.

It may be well to remark, in this place, that this event proves the policy that has prevailed in Canada and Louisiana, in granting lands to the colonists, whereby they were commanded not to scatter themselves, but to concentrate into villages, under the protection of the forts; thus combining for mutual labor as well as mutual defence. Hence the Government ceded tracts of lands for a whole community, on condition that they should be worked in a body. There was first a field assigned, the extent of which was proportioned to the number of families in the village. To each family was allotted a certain portion for cultivation, and all contributed to its general enclosure. Another tract was laid out for the pasturage of the stock, and a third in wood-land. These concessions were called *common lands*, or simply *commons*. There were yet, a few years ago, such commons in the neighborhood of St. Louis, Carondelet, St. Genevieve, Kaskaskia, and near almost all the French villages in Missouri and Illinois.

1785.—This year is called *l'Année des Grandes Eaux*—the year of the great flood. In the month of April, the waters of the Mississippi rose 15 or 20 feet above the highest mark they had ever been known to reach at St. Louis, and at some narrow parts of the river as high as 30 feet. The whole region of country drained by the Mississippi to its mouths, presented the aspect of an immense sheet of water studded with islands. The villages of St. Genevieve, Fort Chartres, Kaskaskia, St. Philippe, Cahokia, &c., were totally submerged; and the inhabitants, who had fled to the hills that overlook the rich bottom, interchanged visits by water from the rocky bluffs of the right side of the river to the hills that border the Kaskaskia. The village of St. Genevieve was then situated on a low prairie, that has since been entirely washed away; and tradition has it, that Mr. Auguste Chouteau, on his way back

from New Orleans, moored his boat, and breakfasted with his men, on the roof of the most elevated house.

In 1788, the traders between St. Louis and New Orleans having been frequently attacked and plundered of their merchandise, on their return, by the band of *Mississippi pirates*, headed by Culbert and Magilbray, who used to lay in wait for them at the mouth of the *rivière aux Liards*, (*Cottonwood creek*,) the Governor of New Orleans took measures against them, and ordered the equipment of an armed convoy of ten boats, which succeeded in breaking up the haunt of the pirates, and returned in triumph to St. Louis. This year is called *l'Année des Dix Bateaux*—in the year of the ten boats.

In 1797, several Spanish galleys, of 40 oars, ascended the river to St. Louis, with troops under the command of Colonel Don Carlos Howard.

1799 to 1800.—Winter of very intense cold but no actual observations of temperature recorded.¹

In 1801 the small-pox, (called by the creoles *picote*,) made its appearance, for the first time, in the country of Illinois and Missouri. The disease was unknown in the country on the 15th of April of this year.

By referring to the dates above, it will be seen that Upper Louisiana was for nearly thirty-two years under the dominion of Spain, and that France had scarcely the time to be aware of the foundation of St. Louis. The colony was ruled by a military government—that is to say, by the arbitrary will of commanders, uniting all authority in themselves, without any guaranty of personal rights, scarcely that of petitioning.

Spain never seems to have sought to take advantage of the resources of Upper Louisiana. It would appear that she looked upon this vast region simply as a barrier against the encroach-

1. This was the second winter of the sort experienced at St. Louis. During the former one, in 1768, the cold had been so intense as to destroy the orange trees in Lower Louisiana, and the banks of the Mississippi were covered with ice.

ment of neighbors upon her supposed more valuable Mexican possession—a policy which alone explains the indifference which she manifested in the government of the country for so many years. Yet a nation becomes great by its genius; and the part which Spain has played in the history of nations does not allow the suspicion that she was ignorant of these resources. When she took possession of the entire country west of the Mississippi, she found a French population already acclimated, civilized, and brought up in hardships endured during its prolonged wars with the British and Indians, and accustomed to sufferings and to privations. The prospects of a more tranquil and easy existence had assembled these people on the Arkansas, the Mississippi, and the Missouri rivers, where they awaited only a protecting government that would permit them in security to develop their industry, and to take advantage of the peace then enjoyed by the whole western region. All that Spain had to do was to open markets for their produce, and they would have supplied her with those provisions which she was obliged to ask of strangers for the nourishment of her southern colonies. By encouraging the cultivation of lands, naturally of easy tillage, varied in their character, fertile, and, in some respects, exhaustless, the population would have increased, the arts of civilization would have found their way among the people, who would have gradually been led to entertain a filial regard for their new parents; and thus would have arisen to the north of Mexico an empire whose enlightened strength would constitute the best of barriers. This vast empire, possessing the grandest natural limits on the earth—bounded by the Mississippi, the Missouri, and the Pacific Ocean—might, by its immense preponderance, have changed the course of those great events that have taken place on the new continent since that period. France could not have aimed at such a power, so long as she was in possession of Canada; but she ought to have thought of it the day when she surrendered that great colony. The mighty results obtained by

the free institutions of the United States of America demonstrate, at this day, that the loss of Canada might have been turned to advantage by France; and that, by fostering the possessions which he still held on the west of the Mississippi, she would have soon been amply repaid for the sacrifices she was compelled to make in 1763, since the colony, which remained to her, had still three times the extent of her own kingdom. Such was the opinion of enlightened men in France. The celebrated statesman Turgot more especially foresaw the advantages of such a policy, and submitted to the King a plan by which this vast region (called by him Equinoxial France) might be largely peopled in a short time. But he was treated as a visionary.

This great scheme of policy, which would have been easy for France to pursue, acquired importance in its adoption, and was of still more natural execution by Spain. But, instead of eagerly seizing upon it, she is contented to encircle the settlers between the Mississippi, the Missouri, and the Indians; imposes upon them arbitrary government; throws obstacles in the way of a free communication with the neighboring people; establishes restrictions upon imports, prohibits foreign competition, and stops the tide of emigration, by requiring of those who present themselves, offering their industry and talents, a certificate that they belong to the Roman Catholic religion. Spain adopts also the impolicy of granting exclusive favors and privileges; makes grants of land without discrimination, often unconditionally; and when conditions are annexed, the grantee is unable to fulfil them, for want of proper encouragement, and from the uncertainty of finding a market for the products of his labor. No wonder she complains that her colony costs her more than it yields; and she would make up the deficiency by driving the population to dig out of the earth by main bodily strength, without the aid of arts, metals of which she reserves for herself the monopoly, as well as that of the salinas.

If we look over the voluminous records of laws and ordi-

nances by which the country was then governed, it is painful to consider the futility of the subjects to which they refer, and the littleness of the motives which have induced their passage. No settled plan ever seems to have been adopted with a view of developing the moral and natural resources of the country. As the Government seemed to provide only for the exigencies of the day, so the inhabitants lived but for the day. It is true there are no evidences that the Spanish authority in Upper Louisiana was ever used with cruelty or oppression, or that it was even vexatious; but it was, perhaps, worse—for it was enervating, and drove to apathy.

Man, however, obeys the impulses of his faculties, as matter is governed by its peculiar properties. The creoles of Upper Louisiana were the descendants of a brave and enterprising nation. Unable to devote their energies to more noble pursuits, or to cultivate the arts of civilized life, they penetrated into the forests, in the midst of numberless tribes of Indians till then unknown, to explore the extensive regions between the Mississippi and the Rocky Mountains, and thus created the fur-trade of this great portion of North America. In these hazardous, distant, and prolonged journeys, was trained a set of hardy men, from whom sprung the class of men known by the name of *voyageurs*, or *engagés*, who were for a long time, and still are, as necessary and efficient on the burning prairies of the West, as the Canadian voyageurs are for the rugged and frozen regions of the North and Northwest. These two haughty and indomitable races have a peculiar character; they are half civilized and half savages; rebellious and submissive; possessed of great courage and power of physical endurance, they fear neither the inclemency of seasons, the pains of hunger, the arrows of the Indian, nor the danger of exposure to wild beasts; never despairing, and always cheerful, they are intelligent, honest, devoted, and gifted with the warmest feelings; they speak, as it were unconsciously, the idioms of the several Indian tribes among whom they have

been; they know all the rivers; all the paths and by-paths, and all the recesses of the wilderness; they are intimately acquainted with the character and wants of the Indians, and possess a good knowledge of the haunts and habits of the wild animals; in a word, they are a class of men with whom no military or scientific expedition, nor trading caravan, no traveller of any description, can dispense.

It was these first explorers who, under the direction of their employers, whom they called their *bourgeois*, (boss,) opened the fur-trade to the north and west of the Missouri river. Such were the certain advantages offered by this trade, because of the natural facilities of the country in affording shorter and easier means of transportation over the British trade, that, had it been well organized and fostered, it would have made a flourishing place of St. Louis, and established a formidable competition capable of destroying all the influence of the British Company. But the Spanish system was fatal to those great interests. To trade with the Indians was a privilege nominally granted as a reward for services rendered, but, in fact, generally adjudged to the highest bidders. A few merchants only amassed fortunes; whilst the colony derived from it no permanent advantage. Far from this, the natural resources of the country were more and more neglected. Such was the fertility of the soil, that it might have been made the granary of all the Spanish possessions at the south; and yet scarcely as much grain was raised as answered the wants of the surrounding country. The most active of the colonists had quitted their fields for the precarious profits of the fur-trade; all the young men turned trappers, hunters, or boatmen; and the peace and contentment of a domestic life were exchanged for one of bustle and adventure. The contrast between the two shores of the Mississippi was obvious. The right shore was marked by listlessness and apathy; whilst the protecting government of Great Britain, although but recently established, had already infused prosperity into the settlements of the left.

A wholesome lesson might have been learned in this contrast; but it was disdained. The colony fell into complete idleness and poverty; and the habits and manners of the inhabitants became, of course, deteriorated, leaving it far in arrear of the progress which civilization was making around it. Towards the close of the last century, all activity and industry had vanished. "People," says a French writer, "worked only to keep themselves from dying and going barefooted, and seemed satisfied with living out a life of carelessness and ignorance, as unprofitable as it was inglorious."

Spain, however, at that time appeared to arouse herself in behalf of her Mississippi possessions. The Marquis de Carondelet was still governor general at New Orleans, and Mr. Charles Dehault Delassus lieutenant-governor of St. Louis. Being both enlightened men, they were aware "that the admission of foreign settlers of every creed was one of the most certain means of promoting the prosperity of their provinces;" and they might at another epoch have effected much good, but it was then too late—the times were completely altered. During the precious years lost by Spain, the nations of the two parts of the world had had their feelings roused for the love of liberty. The Americans had achieved their independence; France had commenced her revolution. If, during these years, the Spanish Government, preoccupied at home, had deemed it its best policy to wait for a more propitious occasion to turn a serious look towards Louisiana, it could not fail now to perceive the error. The progress of events, in its onward march, had arrived at that stage when the next step was to change the entire destinies of this magnificent country.

On the 9th day of July, 1803, at 7 o'clock p. m.—and the precision with which this date is registered indicates the profound sensation with which the news was received—the inhabitants of St. Louis learn, indirectly at first, that Spain had retroceded Louisiana to Napoleon, and that the latter had *sold* it to the United States.

It most generally happens that the state of transition in a nation, from a monarchical form of government to one of almost absolute liberty, is one of prolonged struggles. Those nations that have gone through this ordeal know that it can be passed but at the expense of blood, shed in intestine commotions and foreign wars. But, in this respect, the two Louisianas have been more fortunate, for it only required a few years of schooling. It is true, the Upper Louisiana had to pay higher for her tuition; but this is in the nature of things, for the knowing will always outwit the inexperienced. The good-natured Missourians had not kept pace with the march of civilization. Their existence had become, as it were, so isolated and simplified, that they had lost sight of the advantages of a social compact, which, whilst it imposes salutary restraints, invites emulation and stimulates ambition. There were no public schools in the colony; no regular church, as it was but rarely that the villages were visited by some venerable missionaries, whose number was very small, considering the vast extent of the country. All the purposes of life were embraced within the domestic circle, where virtue, religious faith, and strict honesty were proverbial. Notaries public, lawyers, judges, and tribunals were unknown. There was no other prison than the guard-house of the small Spanish garrison; and it is asserted that, during upwards of thirty years, there was not a solitary instance of civil delinquency, or of crime. Bargains were sealed by a grasp of the hand, and the currency of the country consisted of deer-skins. This state of things did not so much grow out of a relapse to the original condition of those by whom they were surrounded, as of innate candor and simplicity. Old Anglo-Americans who lived among them in these times, and have experienced and enjoyed their heartfelt hospitality, cherish the recollection of them with sincere respect. It is true, that those colonists who engaged themselves in the Indian trade, and were always under arms, as well as those who navigated the rivers, in the transportation of articles of

barter, and were most of their time tugging at the oar or handling the *cordelle*—these, certainly, did not exhibit the same unexceptionable simplicity of manners; but such people were almost always absent from the villages. They were birds of passage to their own families; and though, in the pursuit of their several professions, they could not fail to encounter much that was exceptionable and bad, it is hardly to be presumed that they would poison with it their own firesides.

The French descendants of the present day still retain numerous anecdotes of their ancestors, that graphically describe the unsophisticated nature of the Missourians; among which I may be permitted to select one.

A genuine Missourian, it is related, was hovering for some time around the stall of a negro dealer, situated on the bank of the Mississippi, in Lower Louisiana. The dealer was a Kentucky merchant, who, observing him, asked him if he wished to purchase anything? "Yes," said the Missourian, "I should like to buy a negro." He was invited to walk in, made his choice, and inquired the price. "Five hundred dollars," said the dealer; "but, according to custom, you may have one year's credit upon the purchase." The Missourian, at this proposition, became very uneasy; the idea of having such a load of debt upon him for a whole year was too much. "No, no," said he, "I'd rather pay you six hundred dollars at once, and be done with it." "Very well," said the obliging Kentuckian, "anything to accommodate you."

But to return to the narrative of events. The treaty having been finally ratified on the 30th of April, 1803, Captain Amos Stoddard took possession of the country, which the Spanish troops evacuated on the 3d of November, 1804. Somewhat later, W. H. Harrison, Governor and commander-in-chief of the Indian territory and of Upper Louisiana, organized the judiciary and civil powers; and on the 2d of July, 1805, General James Wilkinson, by order of Congress, established the district of Upper Louisiana under a Territorial Government, which

was called Missouri Territory. By this name it was known until 1820, when it was admitted into the Union as the State of Missouri, and its constitution sanctioned by Congress in 1821.

It is easier to imagine than to describe the astonishment and wonder of the good colonists, when, as a sequel to the sundry official acts by which they were declared *republicans*, and their country a member of the great American confederation *founded by Washington*, they witnessed the arrival of a legion of judges, lawyers, notaries, collector of taxes, &c., &c., and, above all, a flock of vampires in the shape of land speculators. The simple-minded creole could not at first exactly realize the sort of liberty which made it duty, or compelled him, to leave home to go to elections, and to serve as a juryman. St. Louis, however, was the capital of the Territory, by which the feelings and opinions of the other parts of the colony had been directed; and there were among her citizens men of intelligence and capacity, whose example and influence prevailed over the natural repugnance that always arises in the adoption of a radical change in the political conditions of a country. Liberty, with the popular institutions that accompany her, were welcomed; their advantages were soon understood; and perhaps no other instance can be found of the amalgamation of a people with a great nation with so much ease and tranquillity.

What follows to be told of the history of St. Louis is a part of that of the State of which it is now the emporium. It belongs to the local historian to make known the rise and progress of her institutions, under the promoting care of Liberty; foremost among which, he cannot fail to distinguish the noble example of public spirit set by the Catholic clergy, who were the first to establish throughout the country numerous institutions for worship, charity, and public instruction. But, before quitting my narrative, I cannot refrain from alluding to the actual condition of St. Louis, and indulging in the prospect of her future greatness.

The geographical position of the city is favorable to a

remarkable degree. Situated a few miles below the junction of two of the greatest rivers of the world, it is the natural central depot of all the varied products that reach it by navigation of one thousand to two thousand miles over these two rivers and their innumerable tributaries. St. Louis is emphatically the key of the Far West; comprehending within this term the extensive regions stretching between the Mississippi and the Pacific ocean. All distant expeditions to the north, or to the west, must start from St. Louis; and here, also, all their fruits are gathered together, comprising the proceeds of the fur-trade, as well as the mineral and agricultural productions of the whole northern basin of the Mississippi; whence they are distributed to the various markets of consumption, either by the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico, by the Ohio to the Atlantic States, or through Illinois, by the lakes and other opened channels of communication, to the seaboard and the Canadas.

It is worthy of remark—and her geographical position makes it obvious—that no works of internal improvement can be made by any of the neighboring States, whether to the east or north, or even by those that may hereafter be formed to the north or west, without becoming subservient to the interests of St. Louis. Hence the State of Missouri has not deemed it wise to embark hastily in such expenditures; and though, in the true spirit of the time, much reproached on this score, events at this day prove that she acted judiciously. Submitting its great and magnificent territory to the natural and unburdened course of things, without the necessity of levying direct taxes, immigrants have been flocking for several years back to this rich and beautiful country, the resources of which they develop with astonishing rapidity. In 1830, the population of the State was only 140,445; that of St. Louis 6,500. In 1840, the census returned 382,702 as the whole number of the inhabitants of the State; and the population of St. Louis was estimated, in 1841, at 30,000 within the city limits. The amount

of property taxed, according to the city register of the same year, was 8,591,675 dollars.

The first arrival of a steamboat at St. Louis was in 1819; there are now (October, 1841) no less than 67, of from 150 to 800 tons burden, belonging to the port. The whole number engaged in the navigation of the waters of the Mississippi and its tributaries is 310,² most of which come to St. Louis in the course of the year. It was stated above, that Mr. Laclède, in 1763, took three months to come from New Orleans to St. Genevieve with his flotilla, a distance of 1,286 miles; whereas it is not an uncommon thing now, for the larger steamboats to reach St. Louis, which is sixty miles above, in five or six days. Such facts say more than the most eloquent pen could describe.

In concluding this historical sketch, a sad reflection involuntarily arises. Is it not surprising that, during the thirty-two years that Spain had possession of Upper Louisiana, the province was never settled by native Spaniards, excepting the officers who ruled over it, and a few fur-traders? The inhabitants were French, or the descendants of French from Canada or Lower Louisiana; and the Spaniards have left no remembrances of themselves, saving their land register; no institutions, no works, not a single monument of public utility. Doubtless, the golden treasures buried in the mountains of Mexico and of South America were too alluring to allow emigrants to be tempted from them, and engage themselves in the labors of agriculture, in the rich valley of the Mississippi. But, taking a retrospect when Spain was the greatest of maritime powers; when, during the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, her navigators discovered new worlds, giving her an empire on which the sun never set; when the great armada struck terror in the bosom of the haughty Elizabeth,—it be-

2. A list of these steamboats was published in October, 1841, giving the name and tonnage, the date when, and the place where built. Most of them were built in the valley of the Ohio, from 1835 to 1841, inclusive.

comes painful to think how ephemeral is the ascendancy even of the bravest and most prosperous nations! how truly rapid their decline and fall!

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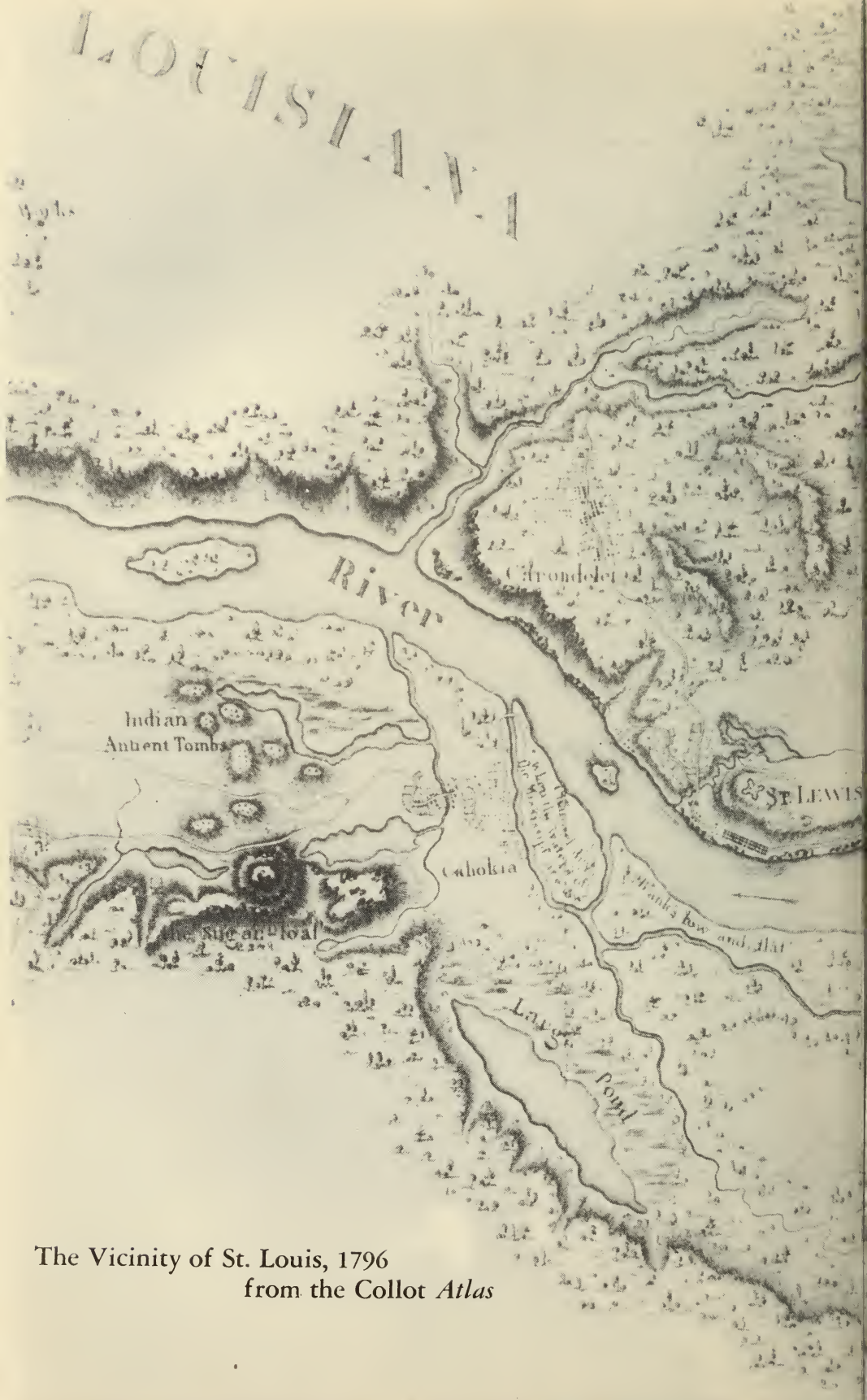
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